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SPAIN—THE UNTIMELY REVOLUTION

Hamza Alavi

The Post-Colonial State

Fernando Henrique
Cardoso

Latin American Capitalism

Octave Mannoni

France and his Savage

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Art as Form of Reality

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Appeasement's Epigones

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Arthur Boyars
Derek Birdsell
B. de Boer, 188 High Street, Nutley, New Jersey
07110, USA
New Left Review, 7 Cariale Street,
London W1V 6NL
Telephone 01-734 8839
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For a whole generation of Marxists, defence of the Spanish revolution was the touchstone of political commitment. It symbolized proletarian internationalism, the alliance to defeat fascism, a perspective of revolution in Europe after a decade and a half of defeats. But, from the start, the Republican left was divided on fundamental issues of strategy. Since the fall of the Republic, a whole series of major historical works has been produced on the civil war and its background. Most of the 'facts' are now available—on political and military developments in Spain itself, on the international conjuncture and Great Power policies, on the extent of Russian aid to the Republic and of Italian and German aid to Franco, etc. But no purely historical resolution is possible of the political differences which split the Republican left: was proletarian revolution a precondition for defeating fascism, or was defeating fascism a precondition for revolution?

Fernando Claudin is a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and former member of the Political Bureau of the Spanish Communist Party—which was and is the principal exponent of the view that the struggle for socialism must be deferred until after the defeat of fascism. He here argues, in a brilliant analysis of the role of Comintern strategy, that in fact the policies which triumphed within the republican camp were a prime cause of its defeat. Claudin concludes that Stalin's conception of the supposed diplomatic interests of the Soviet Union led him to restrict Soviet aid to a level short of that necessary for a Republican victory. In the contemporary

world the sacrifice of revolutionary possibilities to the alleged dictates of diplomacy underlines the continuing relevance of the Spanish case.

In an important theoretical essay, Hamza Alavi analyses the specific nature of the post-colonial state in the under-developed world. Two frequent if opposite errors have marked most discussion of this key topic. Socialists have either treated the post-colonial State as simply a passive tool of metropolitan imperialism, or have contented themselves with assertions of the relative political autonomy of all capitalist states. Alavi marshals ample evidence from the historical experience of Pakistan to show that the type and degree of autonomy which defines the State in many Asian, African and Latin American countries today is qualitatively distinct from that of the State in the advanced capitalist world, because of the structural intersection of three separate classes within it: the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the local semi-feudal landowners. It is this peculiarity, he argues, which paradoxically explains the prominent role of the Army in the majority of so-called 'Third World' regimes today. In a complementary study, the Brazilian sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso attacks the widespread assumption on the left that imperialism is incapable of promoting industrial growth in the under-developed world, and documents the drastic shifts in the pattern and source of US investments in Latin America during the last decade, which has conjoined both 'dependency' and 'development'. Brazil—now in its fifth year of rapid industrial boom—furnishes a notable example of this economic configuration, while its military dictatorship conforms closely to the model set out by Alavi of the typical post-colonial State.

The relationship between art and politics has always been one of the most vexed in the history of socialism in this century, which has seen repeated efforts—in various forms and guises—to collapse the former into the latter in the ambiguous name of a common 'vanguard'. Herbert Marcuse trenchantly criticizes the contemporary versions of this aspiration, reaffirming the irreducible distance between aesthetics and politics, even at the maximum point of their convergence under the implacable pressures of capital. Evoking the contrasting traditions of Kant, Nietzsche and Marx, he explores the possible meanings of the idea of art as immediate 'form of reality', beyond any utilitarianism or formalism, on the other side of the existent division of labour.

Fernando Claudin

Spain— The Untimely Revolution

The Spanish revolution was the only revolution to take place in Europe during the existence of the Communist International, with the transient exception of the 1919 Hungarian soviet republic: but it took the leaders of the 'world party' unawares. In Manuilsky's report to the Comintern Executive in February 1930, he dwelt on 'the enormous prospects now opening up for transforming today's revolutionary upsurge in the advanced capitalist and colonial countries into a revolutionary situation'. The 'revolutionary upsurge' in the 'advanced capitalist countries' at that moment existed only in the mind of Stalin's representative in the Comintern, but shortly before the Executive meeting the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera had fallen, and some of those present raised the question of its significance. Manuilsky replied: 'Spain is not where the fate of the world proletarian revolution will be decided . . . A single strike is of more importance to the international working class than this Spanish-style "revolution", which has taken place without the communist party and the proletariat taking their historic, leading role.'¹ The revolution nonetheless advanced stubbornly,

'Spanish-style', despite Manuilsky's failure to predict it, and despite the fact that the party which should have had the 'historic, leading role' scarcely existed.

When the monarchy fell, in April 1931, the Spanish section of the Communist International had scarcely 800 members. What was worse, it had very little influence among the proletariat and a very low theoretical level. This last factor was common to the whole of the Spanish labour movement. Neither the socialists nor the anarcho-syndicalists—the two great tendencies between which the Spanish proletariat had been divided since the 19th century—had a clear idea of the nature of the revolutionary process which was beginning in 1930-1. The socialists thought it was a purely bourgeois revolution and held to their 'minimum programme'; the bourgeois republican parties, they thought, should take the helm of the republic. The most the socialist party should do was to give them loyal co-operation in carrying out a programme of reforms which would also be in the interests of the Spanish working class. In a word, it was ready to follow the path of European social democracy. The anarcho-syndicalists started from the same assumption—that the revolution was purely bourgeois—but their conclusions for action were quite the reverse: there should be no collaboration with the 14 April Republic. They should carry on to the social revolution to establish 'libertarian communism'. The communists had no clear directives from Moscow in the early months, and improvised on the basis of the ultra-left general line of the Comintern in this period. Their position was summed up in the slogans: 'Down with the bourgeois republic of the capitalists, the generals and the Church!' and 'For the republic of workers', soldiers' and peasants' soviets! The first slogan was typically Spanish, almost anarcho-syndicalist, and the second was quite out of place.

Comintern Directives

The Spanish CP leadership had adopted its position in consultation with the Comintern representatives,² but Moscow put all the blame on the Spanish leaders. The Comintern Executive Committee sent an open letter, dated 21 May 1931, to the Central Committee of the PCP, pointing out the party's mistakes. The most serious was that they had not understood the 'bourgeois democratic' nature of the revolution and the 'leading role' the PCP should have played in such a revolution. Among the directives given in the letter was the slogan 'for the creation of workers', peasants' and soldiers' soviets'; the soviets would be 'the moving force in completing the democratic revolution and ensuring its development into the socialist revolution'. The PCP, according to the 'letter', should use 'the furious resistance of the anarcho-syndicalist and reformist leaders to show the counter-revolutionary nature of Spanish reformism and anarcho-syndicalism'. One of the most telling directives in the document (which the PCP took as its guideline for 1931-2) was:

¹ D. Manuilsky, report and closing speech to the Enlarged Executive Committee meeting of the Communist International, 18-28 February 1930, in *Ispravcor*.

² Humbert Droz and Rabaté. There is an account of this by the then general secretary of the party, José Bujlejos, in his book *Europa entre dos guerras*, p. 135.

that 'the communist party should *in no circumstances, or for a single moment*, make pacts or alliances *with any other political force*.'

Evidently the Comintern had rather an odd way of correcting the sectarianism of the PCE leadership. In April 1931 a struggle began between the leadership of the PCE and the Comintern, and it grew worse in the following months. Once the PCE had understood the absurdity of its original positions, it took an orientation which in some respects was quite close to Trotsky's early analysis of the Spanish revolution, at the same time showing a certain amount of independence towards the representatives of the Comintern in Spain. (The foremost of these, Codovilla, acted as if he was the real general secretary of the party, which in effect he was and continued to be until the civil war, when higher level functionaries came on the scene.) The struggle came to a head with General Sanjurjo's attempted *coup d'état* (10 August 1932). The PCE leadership called for the 'defence of the Republic', and the Comintern leadership described this position as 'opportunist'. Shortly afterwards Bullejos (general secretary), Adame, Vega and Trilla (who was the PCE representative to the Comintern) were expelled from the leadership and later from the party, charged with forming a 'sectarian opportunist group'.

The core of Trotsky's position was that there could be no 'bourgeois democratic' stage restricted to the liquidation of 'feudal survivals' *under the hegemony of the proletariat*, between the current stage of the Spanish revolution under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie and the proletarian stage under the hegemony of the working class (the dictatorship of the proletariat). The history of the Spanish revolution up to 1939 proved him right. In September 1932 he wrote: 'The immediate task of Spanish communists is not to seize power, but to win the masses. In the coming period this struggle will develop on the basis of the bourgeois republic, and largely under democratic slogans.'³

Revolution Spanish-style

The fact of the matter, however, was that no one in either Moscow or Madrid knew what was going to happen. No sooner had the 'Church republic' been proclaimed than it seemed the graveyard of churches, and the generals quickly turned to plotting against the 'generals' republic'. The new Spanish Constitution attempted to clarify the situation by declaring it to be 'a republic of workers of all classes'.

But the upper-class 'workers' were rushing to get their capital out of the country, while the lower-class workers were declaring strikes and invading the big estates, with the explicit aim of reducing it to a republic of one class only. The Constitution defined Spain as a 'single State', but accepted the autonomy principle, so that the nationalities on the periphery which had borne the weight of Castilian centralism since the 16th century tended to break up the 'single State' into three or four. Azaña announced the astounding news that Spain 'was no

³ *La révolution permanente* (collection), Paris 1969, p. 344.

longer Catholic', while the Cortes, which had put Azaña at the head of the government, elected the deeply devout Alcalá Zamora as President of the Republic. Araquistain confidently stated that 'no people is by race [*sic*] so socialist as Spain', while Unamuno came out for the *fueros* of Spanish individualism. No sooner had it come into the world than the Spanish republic displayed a thousand faces. Ortega y Gasset wisely said that 'The contours of the Republic must be straightened out': and while every well-read lady admired the profundity of the philosopher, the State police began 'straightening it out' by gunning down the peasantry. In a word, revolution 'Spanish-style' appeared somewhat complicated; but the Comintern did not hesitate to classify it as the type of 'bourgeois democratic' revolution dealt with in the theory Lenin had developed for—Russia at the turn of the century.

According to this theory—or rather, to the Comintern's dogmatic version of it—a two-stage strategy had to be applied to the Spanish revolution, as follows: the first stage would have to solve the problems 'left over' by the uncompleted bourgeois revolution; but as the bourgeoisie was no longer revolutionary, the proletariat would have to take the leading role in liquidating the 'feudal survivals' (the big estates, Church property, the military caste, the aristocracy, the oppressed nationalities, etc). Only when these problems had been resolved could the proletariat take the offensive against private capitalist ownership of the means of production, that is, pass from the 'bourgeois democratic' stage to the 'socialist' stage, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Until the middle of 1934, the Comintern applied this strategy in Spain with the fiercely sectarian tactics of the period of 'social fascism'. In the parliamentary elections of November 1933, for example, the PCB platform was a call to the struggle for a 'soviet Spain', with the declaration that 'the bourgeois democratic parties, together with the specialists . . . have been and are the organizing centre for all counter-revolution'. 'Therefore', the document says, 'if fascism is to be defeated there must be an implacable struggle against the mutinous forces of bourgeois democracy which are encouraging and stimulating it.'

Popular Front

Fortunately, the turn in the Comintern in the summer of 1934 allowed the PCB to embark on a policy more in accordance with the realities of Spain. It joined the Workers' Alliance and established relations with the Socialist Party. Its outstanding part in the Asturias insurrection in October 1934 raised its revolutionary prestige. In April 1935, following the example of the French, the PCB proposed the creation of a Popular Anti-fascist Bloc. The idea was successful, despite resistance from the anarcho-syndicalists and the left wing of the Socialist Party under Largo Caballero, both because there was heavy repression against the proletariat after the Asturias insurrection and because the forces of reaction were preparing to establish a dictatorship, to which not only the workers' organizations but the 'left' republican parties would fall victim. Anti-fascist unity was a good way of achieving an effective front for defence against this threat, and of creating more favourable conditions for a popular counter-offensive. Nonetheless it is unlikely

that it would have taken shape without the occasion of the February 1936 elections. The decisive question for the *caballeristas* was the possibility of achieving amnesty for political prisoners, and annulling other repressive measures, if the republican-labour bloc won the elections. This made it possible for the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) and the UGR (trade-union federation) to take part in the Popular Front and also swung the votes of a large part of the anarcho-syndicalist masses to the Popular Front candidates.

The Popular Front coalition was formed by the republican parties under Azaña and Martínez Barrio, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Youth, the UGR, PCE, Syndicalist Party and the POUM. Its programme was basically that of the Azaña republicans. Under pressure from the Caballero group, the PSOE had proposed the nationalization of land and banking and workers' control of industry, but this was opposed by the republicans. They even refused another proposal by the socialists to guarantee the right to strike. All the basic problems were avoided and even the few timid reforms in the programme were ambiguously formulated. The pact further implied a compromise, allowing the republicans alone to run the government. This was all that was needed to open the way to the civil war, which in covert forms was already being waged in Spain.

Togliatti and the Policy of Stages

The Comintern, however, had its own view of the Popular Front policy. Togliatti, who was very influential in the orientation of the PCE—and even led it in practice during the civil war—was later to say that 'the anti-fascist Popular Front was the particular form in which the Spanish revolution was unfolding at that stage'—that is, the 'bourgeois democratic' stage.⁴ The Comintern still held to the basic view of the nature and course of the Spanish revolution described above, but the 'particular form' it now assumed had what one might have called a 'moderating' or 'softening' effect—if events had not made it clear that the effect was above all illusory. There was firstly a tendency to re-evaluate the role of the petty-bourgeois social and political forces, and even certain nuclei of the bourgeoisie (especially in the nationalities on the periphery), could play in the inevitable bourgeois democratic stage of the revolution. A first concrete expression of this moderating turn was the electoral programme of the Popular Front (which became the programme of the government after its victory): it went no further than the traditional programmes of petty-bourgeois republicanism. It contained no real solutions to any of the basic problems of the 'stage' referred to. The land question, the most pressing of all problems, was left to fester on again. The PCE promised to keep scrupulously to the agreed compromise, which meant that the overworked 'stage' was in effect divided in two. The first sub-stage would be restricted to carrying out this programme, and during it the party would support the government (a government of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois republican parties only) which was entrusted with its implementation. In the

⁴ 'Sulle particolarità della rivoluzione spagnola', in *Sul movimento operaio internazionale*, Rome 1964, p. 181.

second sub-stage, the party would go ahead with all the forces prepared to bring the bourgeois democratic revolution 'to its completion'. Only after this 'completion' would the hour of the proletarian revolution have arrived.

By contrast with the simplistic 'direct action' plans of the anarcho-syndicalists and the vagueness of Caballero's tactics, the tactical and strategical plan drawn up by the Comintern's 'Spanish experts' appeared a model of correct method, with its clear distinction between stages and phases; its concentration of forces in each against the main enemy; and the corresponding listing of aims in the context of growing radicalization. The PCP was careful to stress that it was giving up none of its revolutionary aims: that the dictatorship of the proletariat was still the ultimate goal and could follow no model but the soviet one. The plan was *prima facie* faultless. But it had one rather important disadvantage: it ran counter to the basic dynamics of the Spanish revolution.

The revolution had, in effect, gone a long way since 1930-1. An extreme polarization of social and political forces had taken place. The main nuclei of the bourgeoisie, including most of the medium bourgeoisie and important layers of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, basically those exploiting wage labour, formed a *de facto* bloc with the landowning aristocracy, the military and ecclesiastical castes and the fascist groups. The bloc was undoubtedly composed of very disparate elements, in terms of political tendencies as well as social composition, but there was one common denominator: fear of the advance of the revolution. It was united by the idea that the only way to save property, order, the family, religion, the fatherland and similar 'eternal values' from the advance of the revolution, was a return to strong government, to a dictatorship. These social groups were right in their class instinct, if not in their estimation of the objective situation, for the proletariat had, in fact, overwhelmingly gone over to extreme revolutionary positions. Thoroughly disillusioned with the parliamentary republic established on 14 April and with its liberal politicians, the proletariat now trusted only in its own strength, its class organizations: it no longer believed in the 'minimum programme' or halfway measures. It is no exaggeration to say that its 'minimum programme' was now social revolution.

The 'Spanish Lenin'

However great the confusion in ideology, politics and tactics, one clear idea prevailed: the capitalists and landowners, great, lesser and even 'small' alike, must be expropriated as soon as possible. (It should not be forgotten that the economic structure of Spain at that time was such that a large part of the industrial and agricultural proletariat was exploited by small and medium owners). By mid-1936, not only the anarcho-syndicalist masses, but even the socialists and UGR members, to whom Largo Caballero was the 'Spanish Lenin', were in this frame of mind. Urged on by the revolutionary atmosphere of the whole country, and attracted by the evident resolution of the proletariat, other social layers also took up radical positions: the great mass of

poor peasants, the rural semi-proletariat and some of the small peasants who cultivated their tiny plots of land without the use of wage labour; important sections of office workers and of the professions, that is, the layers of the petty bourgeoisie not engaged in exploitation; and an important section of student youth and of the intelligentsia. These layers had also become disillusioned with the liberal Republican politicians.

If the over-worked metaphor of the volcano as applied to socio-political situations is very often used in too subjective a way, for Spain in February 1936 it was strictly objective. As soon as the electoral victory of the Popular Front was known the volcano began to erupt. The contradiction of the first 'sub-stage' envisaged in the Comintern's tactical and strategic plan adopted by the PCP immediately became apparent. The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois republican parties forming the government at once showed that they were the same as ever. Their politics was identical with that of the period 1931-3, which had disillusioned the masses and opened the door to the reactionary counter-offensive. It was the masses who had changed; as the Soviet historian Maidanik says, 'now trusting only in their own strength, they took over the streets and, without waiting for the government's decisions, began with revolutionary method to carry out from below the programme of the Popular Front. They freed the political prisoners, forced the employers to re-instate workers sacked for political reasons and, in March of the same year, started land occupations. The middle of March saw the beginning of strikes started by hunger, need, lock-outs and fascist provocations. The strike movement grew each month. Factories and workshops, building sites and mines came to a standstill; businesses closed down. In June and July there were on average 10 or 20 strikes a day. There were days on which 400,000-450,000 were on strike. And 95 per cent of strikes taking place between February and July were won by the workers. Massive workers' demonstrations went through the streets demanding bread, work, land, the smashing of fascism and the total victory of the revolution. The first collective enterprises were set up. Meetings called out tens of thousands, and the workers enthusiastically applauded the orators who announced that the hour of the final overthrow of capitalism was at hand and made the call to "follow the Russian example". From strikes they went on to the occupation of factories where the owners had declared lock-outs. The occupation of the streets, the factories and the estates, and constant strike action, threw the urban and agricultural proletariat into the highest forms of political struggle.'

All the historians of the period confirm that this eloquent description is an accurate one. But what had this revolutionary explosion to do with the 'carrying out of the Popular Front programme', which had no room for land occupations, factory occupations or the liquidation of capitalism, but rather aimed to preserve private property at every level? Maidanik is, of course, obliged to reconcile the actual course of events with a 'demonstration' that the Comintern's policy was correct.⁵

⁵ K. L. Maidanik, *Ispanski proletariat v natsional-revolutsionnoi voine* (The Spanish proletariat in the national revolutionary war), Izd. Akademii Nauk, Moscow 1960 p. 64-5.

Triple Power

Between February and July there was in effect a triple-power situation in Spain. Legal power was, in effect, very slight. The power of the workers, their parties and trade unions became apparent in the way described. And then there was the power of the counter-revolution, which might have been manifest externally in the aggressive speeches of its parliamentary representatives, in economic sabotage and in the actions of the fascist shock-troops, but operated above all in secret, in the operations rooms, carefully preparing the military coup. It was an open secret; for the generals' conspiracy was public knowledge, denounced in parliament and an object of agitation in public meetings.

Anyone studying these crucial months of 1936 in Spain is obliged to ask: Why did the workers' parties and organizations fail to act in a concerted and decisive way to nip the military uprising in the bud and resolutely drive on with the revolutionary process? The proletariat's reply to the uprising, defeating it in the greater part of the country, despite the fact that the conspirators had the initiative and the advantage of surprise, showed how favourable the relationship of forces was to the people's side. Why did the workers' parties and the trade unions not come forward? A rapid glance at their basic political positions will allow us at least to grasp the fundamental reasons, if not to clarify the problem totally.

In this period the reformists were definitely in the minority in the Socialist Party and the UGT, although they kept the leadership of the party because of their ability to control the party apparatus. Under the leadership of Indalecio Prieto, they proposed to participate in the government in order to collaborate with the republicans in the reformation of politics in the years 1931-3: to struggle on both fronts, against reaction and against revolution. But the firm opposition of most of the party's local organizations prevented them from actually participating.

Caballero's Socialist Party

The great mass of workers belonging to the UGT, like most of the members of the Socialist Party, followed the left leadership of Largo Caballero. The Caballero tendency were in effect a separate party, and they put forward the socialist revolution as their immediate objective, criticizing the idea of an intermediary, anti-fascist bourgeois democratic stage defended by the PCR. They said that it was necessary to go straight on to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. They did not have a precise definition of the structure of such a 'dictatorship', but affirmed that it would, of course, be led by the Socialist Party, as the main political party of the Spanish working class. At the same time, nonetheless, they were in favour of uniting with the communists to form a single Marxist party. They also proposed to unite the two main trade union confederations, the UGT and the CNT. *Caballerismo* was an expression of the revolutionary radicalization of the great mass of the industrial and agricultural proletariat under the old banners of Spanish socialism and their firm intention to finish once and for all with the regime of capitalists and landlords.

The main weakness of *caballerismo* was its lack of tactics adequate for the struggle to take power. It was waiting for the failure of the republican government to make the State fall into its hands like a ripe fruit. It under-estimated the threat of the other power which was plotting a counter-revolutionary attack. From April 1936, the *caballeristas* had their own daily paper, *Claridad*. In April the Madrid Socialist Group passed a resolution reflecting the basic position of the left wing: 'The proletariat must not restrict itself to the defence of bourgeois democracy, but must by every means possible assure the conquest of political power, and carry out its own social revolution on the basis of this. In the period of transition from capitalist to socialist society, the form of government will be the dictatorship of the proletariat.' On 1 May 1936, the socialist youth demonstrated in uniform on the slogans 'A workers' government' and 'A red army'. The *caballeristas* had the UGR firmly in their hands, and between February and July its membership grew to one and a half million. The UGR incorporated the powerful Federation of Land Workers, with a membership of several hundred thousand proletarians and semi-proletarians.

The other main traditional current of the Spanish labour movement, organized in the CNT unions, also had an extreme revolutionary position. But its ideological basis made it very difficult for it to make agreements with the Marxist parties, or even with the Marxist-oriented trade unions in the UGR. The constant repression anarcho-syndicalism had suffered at the hands of the republican governments, in which the socialists participated, had increased their mistrust not only of political parties in general, but of the workers' parties in particular. The idea of a State under the dictatorship of the proletariat was almost as repulsive to the anarcho-syndicalists as the bourgeois State; and as for the latter, they made little distinction between the parliamentary democratic and fascist forms. This led them to under-estimate the threat of fascism, if for different reasons from the *caballeristas*. The evolution of the Soviet State, the fate of anarchism in it, and the reduction of the Soviet trade unions to a mere bureaucratic arm of the State, had a considerable influence in hardening the a-political anti-State conceptions of the mass of Spanish anarcho-syndicalists and above all of the leading cadre. Nonetheless, the experience of the failure of previous attempts at revolution had produced a major change in the CNT: its congress in May 1936 proposed a 'revolutionary pact' with the UGR, in order 'completely to destroy the political and social regime governing the life of the country', leaving the question of the organization of the new social order to 'free election by the free association of workers'. Nonetheless, the conference elaborated a very detailed programme for the structure and working of the 'libertarian communist' society which was to emerge from the revolution; and the CNT continued to be opposed to any alliance with the political parties of labour.⁶

Trade-Union Unity

In the plan of tactics and strategy referred to previously, the PCB proposed trade-union unity of the UGR and CNT, but on the basis of

⁶ See Jose Pelrats, *La CNT en la revolución española*, Toulouse 1951, p. 116.

totally different assumptions from those of the CNT. In the first place, it was not a question of going on to the proletarian revolution, but of defending and consolidating the republican parliamentary regime, and 'putting pressure' on the republican government to carry out the programme of the Popular Front. In the second place, the leadership of united proletarian action would have to be in the hands of the workers' parties and not of the trade unions. The party laid particular stress on the urgency of developing the unity in action it had already established with the Socialist Party, and at the same time looked forward to the unification of the two parties into a single Marxist-Leninist party. These perspectives for unity at all levels and in all spheres were the strong side of CP policy, because they obviously answered the imperative needs of the objective situation, especially the threat of a counter-revolutionary coup. The party was more clearly aware of the seriousness of this danger than any other political or trade-union group.

But at the same time the content of this unity perspective came into conflict with basic elements of this same objective situation. The real dilemma the situation implied was not one of establishment of a counter-revolutionary dictatorship versus consolidation of the bourgeois democratic parliamentary republic. It was of counter-revolutionary dictatorship versus proletarian revolution, if only for the simple reason that the sole force able to prevent counter-revolutionary dictatorship had not the slightest intention of afterwards supporting the bourgeois democratic parliamentary republic. (This was a major difference with the situation in Germany before fascism, for there the majority of the proletariat was ideologically and structurally integrated into bourgeois democracy.) In posing the urgency of united action on the basis of the first alternative, the PCE met with full agreement from the reformist minority of the Socialist Party, reticence if not open rejection from the *caballeristas* and hostility from the anarcho-syndicalists. The *caballeristas* and anarcho-syndicalists made a serious error in failing to appreciate the extent of the fascist danger and not taking the initiative—laying aside all differences in doctrine and tactics—in resolute and concerted action against it. But their error in substance was not to under-estimate the seriousness of this danger for the bourgeois parliamentary republic, but rather to fail to understand its seriousness for the proletarian revolution.

By not putting this aspect of the question *to the fore*, the PCE certainly did not help the *caballeristas* and anarcho-syndicalists to understand their error. On the contrary, it unwittingly contributed to their persistence in error. So far did they confuse the question of nipping the military conspiracy in the bud with the proletarian revolution in these months, that for them the only real way of achieving the former would have been to throw out the petty-bourgeois republican government—whose passivity if not cowardice had allowed the treason plot to be woven—and establish a power which would allow the revolutionary forces of the working class to take the bull by the horns. Between February and July, the Spanish revolution had to confront a situation increasingly similar to that of the Russian revolution on the eve of the October days. Either the proletarian revolution took the initiative, or it would be taken by the counter-revolution. Casares Quiroga was a

perfect Kerensky. But Spain had no Lenin. There was instead an abundance of Comintern advisers. Genuine revolutionaries and organizers like Jose Diaz and Pedro Checa, and popular orators of the status of Dolores Ibarurri, did not have the necessary theoretical basis to oppose the Popular Front schemes of the Comintern, imported into Spain with the French seal of approval. (We Spanish communists had the same experience as the 19th-century liberals: we had no ideas of our own, developed on the basis of an analysis of Spanish society. Instead of using Marxism as an aid to the particularity of the Spanish revolution, we used the Spanish revolution to serve the particular kind of Marxism which had been valid for the Russian revolution. In 1936 we welcomed the Popular Front, in the Thorez or Togliatti version, as the 'particular form' of the Spanish revolution, until the time came for it to assume the 'soviet form'.)

Party Unity

During the whole existence of the Comintern, no other communist party had such a good opportunity as the Spanish to achieve unity with the left wing of social democracy and form a single Marxist party. The possibility had been there since the end of 1934. The left wing of the socialists decisively came over to Marxist ideas and was in favour of unification. Of course, there was much that was dubious and problematic about its positions, and not all the left wing leaders were inspired by the purest of motives. Some of them (undoubtedly Largo Caballero himself) clearly went by partisan calculations and were aiming for hegemony. But the Comintern's treatment of the problem was not exempt from the same considerations. It was somewhat paradoxical, in the light of the role of the communist party in the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat, that one of the main points with which the PCB reproached the *caballeristas* was their desire to be the leading force in the dictatorship of the proletariat in Spain. But the insuperable obstacle was the Comintern's belief that it possessed the absolute truth of Marxism: that the proletarian revolution could now be led only by the Comintern; that the soviet model was essential for every country; that the 'Marxist-Leninist party' had to be structured and to work on the lines of the type of party created by the Comintern; that the Comintern had the only correct theory of the Spanish revolution; that the policy of the Popular Front was as suitable for Spain as for France or Italy; that a 'Marxist-Leninist' party had to consider Trotskyism the most pernicious of all heresies, and ban all criticism of the kind of socialism being built in the Soviet Union, etc. Even if the leaders of the left wing socialists had been the most angelic of revolutionaries, they could clearly not have agreed to unification on this basis, and in any case they showed no angelic predisposition. The creation of a great revolutionary party of the Spanish proletariat was an exceptionally strong possibility between 1934 and 1936, but its basis in Marxism was an open, problematic question. The Comintern, of course, could not approach the question in this way without ceasing to be the Comintern. It is one of its heaviest historical responsibilities, for if such a party had been created in time it would have considerably increased the probability of a victory of the Spanish revolution, and thereby modified the course of events in Europe.

The July days plainly showed how 'ripe' the proletarian revolution was in Spain, and how favourable the relationship of forces was. The counter-revolutionary coup had the advantages of being able to choose its moment, of following a plan, being directed by a central command, and relying on the main armed forces of the State. Yet it was defeated in the best part of the country—the decisive regions from the economic and demographic point of view—by the resolute counter-attack of the proletarian forces, despite their acting in a dispersed way, without any nationally co-ordinated plan or leadership, and in most cases without even proper local leadership. The workers' organizations undoubtedly played a most important role, but the spontaneous movement from the midst of the proletarian masses of town and country was equally decisive. The republican State fell like a pack of cards, and the passive, vacillating, if not frankly capitulationist behaviour of the legal authorities and most of the petty bourgeois republican party leaders was an important contribution to the few successes of the counter-revolutionary forces. At the end of the first few days of fighting the revolution had not won decisively, but the relation of forces in the country as a whole was frankly favourable to it. What would have been the course of events if 'legalism' had been 'superseded' in the previous months? If instead of beginning by attacking the barracks when the military had already taken the initiative, the working class had begun by 'attacking power'—which had been almost within its reach since 16 February—and used that power to organize the attack on the barracks?

International Forces

If the civil war which was beginning had been fought only by the Spanish antagonists, there would have been little doubt of the outcome. But as the armed struggle was bound to be one between revolution and counter-revolution in Spain, it automatically turned into an international problem.

Until this moment, the contradiction between the Comintern's idea of the nature of the Spanish revolution and reality was not directly determined by the requirements of Soviet foreign policy. It undoubtedly had an indirect effect, in so far as the general line adopted by the VIIth Congress of the Comintern, and in particular the French version of the Popular Front policy, were, as we saw, heavily conditioned by the European strategy of the Soviet leaders. But Spain as such had not yet entered Stalin's field of vision. The problem was posed quite suddenly, and in difficult terms. The USSR could not escape its duty of active solidarity with the armed struggle of the Spanish people, at the risk of being discredited in the eyes of the world proletariat. This duty coincided, on the one hand, with the anti-Hitler orientation of Soviet foreign policy at this period. But on the other hand it came into conflict with the mechanisms, or should we say tactics, of this orientation. At this level, the number one orientation of Soviet policy was to consolidate the military alliance with France and reach an understanding with England. But neither Blum's bourgeois France, nor Chamberlain's conservative England, could countenance the victory of proletarian revolution in Spain. For the Soviet govern-

ment, aiding its victory would mean breaking with both powers. The only apparent possibility for reconciling 'aid to Spain' with the stated objectives of Soviet foreign policy, was for the Spanish proletariat to stop short at the maximum the French and English bourgeoisie could accept. And the most they could accept was that Spain should have a democratic parliamentary republic, which could even be anti-fascist and popular frontist, as far left as may be, as long as it was *bourgeois*! It was even far from certain that the English Conservatives would accept such a solution, but in any case it was the only way open to Stalin to attempt to reconcile, as well as he could, the contradictory demands history was again piling upon him, with his double historical personality as the great, wise, trusted and tried leader of the Communist International (in Dimitrov's words to the VIIth Congress) and the equally great and wise leader of the Soviet State.

Beyond the Limits

The problem was that the Spanish proletariat had left these reasonable limits far behind. In the weeks after 19 July, the capitalist order practically ceased to exist in the republican area: the means of production and political power in effect passed into the hands of the workers' organizations. All historians of the Spanish civil war are in agreement on this point, except for those who do not aim for historical truth, but to justify the policy of Stalin and the Comintern. These latter 'historians' continue to proclaim that the content of the Spanish revolution never went beyond the 'bourgeois democratic stage', because to say otherwise would be a recognition that Stalinist policy in Spain was to hold back the revolution. The Soviet historian referred to above was subjected to severe criticism for daring to contradict the official line on this and other delicate questions: 'As I see it', he wrote in his book *The Spanish proletariat in the national revolutionary war*, 'the events of 19 July were the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the Spanish revolution. The action of the mass of the proletariat, and their subjective attitude, confirm this conclusion. In July-August 1936, the basic problems of the revolution were in effect solved: the problems of power and of the ownership of the means of production. Local power in practice passed into the hands of the armed proletariat. They, and to a lesser extent the peasantry, also gained control of all the instruments and means of production belonging to the capitalists and land-owners. A large part of the bourgeoisie, together with their state apparatus, were liquidated in the areas held by the Republic. None of this fits into the framework of a bourgeois democratic revolution.'⁷

It did not 'fit' indeed. But it had to be 'made to fit', so that Soviet aid to the Spanish republic could in turn 'fit' into Soviet foreign policy. The hard Comintern team established in Spain to supervise the activity of the PCB, together with the equally hard team of military advisers and Soviet politicians, zealously applied themselves to making a success of this troublesome operation. It was in fact exceptionally troublesome, because what it involved was nothing less than forcing the proletarian revolution back into the bourgeois democratic framework it 'should

⁷ Malsanik, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

not have' left. This was much more complicated than Thorez's 'being able to call off a strike'. For a start, it was necessary to deny the anti-bourgeois reality of the revolution, so that action aiming to restore bourgeois reality could appear to be something other than what it was. The Comintern, world party of the socialist revolution, could not take the liberty of proclaiming the correction of the socialist contours of the Spanish revolution as bare-facedly as the philosopher had proclaimed the straightening out of the plebeian contours of the Azaña republic. Certain forms had to be observed. For that it was necessary at the start to proclaim *urbi et orbi* that the Spanish revolution was 'in essence a popular, democratic, anti-fascist national movement, with the main aim of defending the republic, freedom and sovereignty against fascist rebellion and the brutal interference of Hitler's and Mussolini's armies.'⁸ Everything beyond this 'essence' was an 'excess' of *caballerismo*, anarcho-syndicalism, and of the masses who had not been adequately educated in Marxism-Leninism.

Togliatti wrote that 'one of the characteristics of the Spanish Popular Front was that a series of extra difficulties was created for the struggle of the Spanish people to defend the democratic republic by: the division of the proletariat; the relatively slow taking up of the armed struggle by the peasantry; the influence of petty-bourgeois anarchism and of social democratic illusions, which have still not been totally overcome and are today expressed in a tendency to miss out the stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution.'⁹

Saving the Legal Facades

The salvation of the 'essence' of the revolution was accompanied by a reaffirmation of principles and of symbols. The 1931 constitution, embodying these principles, was still maintained. Parliament's functions were preserved; though half of the members had joined the rebellion and as for half of the remaining half (the republican Members) there was no knowing who they represented in the revolutionary areas; Azaña, President of the Republic, remained at his post. The republican State was still *the* legal power, although the real powers were in other hands. Legally, capitalist ownership of the means of production was not abolished, while in practice it was virtually destroyed. 'Never place too much trust in the stupidity of your opponents' was Talleyrand's advice, and the politicians of the European bourgeoisie were obviously not stupid. The legal facade of the Spanish republic did not deceive them. They demanded the effective restoration of the bourgeois system. But the facade was useful to Stalin and to the Comintern in various ways. In the first place, it allowed them to present 'aid to Spain' as aid to the republican legal order defined by the 1931 Constitution. Secondly, it helped to justify the theoretical fiction of the 'bourgeois democratic' character of the Spanish revolution. And thirdly, it provided an ideological, political and legal structure which could be used both to promote and to encompass the methodical transformation of this fiction into reality. Of course this last, essential operation could

⁸ *Guerre y Revolución en España*, Moscow 1966, Vol. 1, p. 256. This account was compiled by a commission led by Dolores Ibarruri.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 196, n. 133. Emphasis is mine.

only be carried out with the support and collaboration of the Spanish revolutionary forces themselves, which was a real problem. But Stalin and the Comintern had one decisive weapon, or more precisely they had weapons.

One thing was in fact obvious, independently of whether the course of the revolution affirmed its already-established proletarian character, or returned to its liberal bourgeois nature in the way the Azañas and Prietos were hoping. If the military forces of the rebellious generals and their Italian and German allies were not defeated, then every possible 'course' was doomed to run into disaster. To win militarily the revolution *urgently* needed arms and the technicians to operate them. It was immediately clear that these could only come from the USSR: and equally clear that they would not come from the USSR if the Spanish leaders did not adjust to the policy the Soviet leaders considered necessary if they were to harmonize aid to the Spanish republic with Stalin's general strategy. In the early months of the civil war all the Spanish leaders, from Azaña to Nin, understood this condition and tried to adapt to it, in very different ways.

A Workers' Government

In the first weeks of the war, the *caballeristas*, the anarcho-syndicalists and the POUM were for the formation of a workers' revolutionary government. According to Rabassaire and Campoamor,¹⁰ the project was formalized in late August at a joint meeting of leaders of the UGT and CNT. There was to be a Junta with Largo Caballero as President and representatives from the Socialist and Communist Parties, the FAI, the CNT and the UGT. The republicans would be excluded. When he learnt of the plan, Azaña threatened to resign. But the decisive factor was the intervention of the Soviet ambassador, Rosenberg, who had recently arrived in Madrid. Rosenberg argued the serious international consequences which would ensue if the friends of Spain were deprived of the argument of the 'legality' of the republican government. He proposed that instead of a workers' council there should be a government under Largo Caballero, with representation for the working-class forces but also for the bourgeois republicans. Such a solution would make it possible for the USSR to send aid.¹¹

For the PCB there was no problem, as the policy of the Soviet Union, Comintern policy and its own policy were an indivisible whole. It was an application of the general line of the VIIth Congress of the Comintern. To defeat the main enemy, fascism, the essential point was to ensure the broadest possible unity of action among all its opponents. There was no contradiction between the international policy of the Soviet Union—for alliance with the bourgeois states threatened by Hitler's Germany—and the national policy of the communist parties—for alliance with the liberal sections of the bourgeoisie. Once fascism was defeated the way would be open to go forward to the socialist

¹⁰ Rabassaire, *Espagne, croquis politique*, Paris 1938, p. 98; Clara Campoamor, *La révolution espagnole vue par une républicaine*, Paris 1937, 143-5.

¹¹ This version is accepted by Pierre Broué.

revolution. This was more certain in the case of Spain than in any other, as the proletariat had hegemonic positions within the alliance. Once the war was won they could go on to the next stage, and finally to the dictatorship of the proletariat. But to win the war the decisive thing was to maintain the anti-fascist alliance, nationally as well as internationally. This meant that socialist objectives should not for the moment be posed in Spain, the excesses of the revolution should be 'corrected', and concessions to the bourgeois republicans and reformist socialists even increased—to see if Blum could then be induced to help the Spanish republic. The model was at first sight very coherent, but the condition was that all those involved should be prepared to carry out faithfully the role assigned to them. This was far from what actually happened.

Azaña's Strategy

The Azaña-type liberals and the Prieto-type reformist socialists were the most willing, because this line of development closely corresponded to their basic preoccupations: the restoration of the republican State, the liquidation of 'extremism', a drawing near to the western democracies, etc. It was no accident that in the month and a half of the Giral government (10 July–4 September), consisting exclusively of the bourgeois republican parties, 'the unifying, constructive policy of the Communist Party, which subjected everything to the needs of war, gained in influence over government measures'; nor that Azaña said to foreign journalists: 'If you want to get a real understanding of the situation, and know men who are certain what they want, read *Mundo Obrero*.'¹² But Azaña was also very certain what he wanted, and it was not to win the war in such conditions that the Communist Party would gain hegemony and the way forward to the dictatorship of the proletariat would be laid clear. As his Memoirs show quite clearly, his aim was the restoration of the 14 April Republic, and his tactics were to use the Communist party in the first phase as a barrier to *caballerismo* and anarcho-syndicalism and then, in a second phase, to reduce the Communist Party to impotence (taking advantage of the fact that the first phase would have brought it into conflict with the main groupings of the revolutionary proletariat). Prieto's line, and even Negrin's, was similar, and Azaña's Memoirs reveal the close collaboration of the Azaña-Prieto-Negrin 'troika' in the second stage of the war, which opened with the dissolution of the Largo Caballero government in May 1937.

The 'Cuaderno de la Pobleta' (1937) and the 'Pedralbes' journal (1938, 1939) in the Azaña Memoirs give extremely useful information for the historic reconstruction of the Spanish civil war. They make it clear that Azaña had a more important role than has generally been attributed to him until now in the historiography of the period, above all after the formation of the Negrin government. His basic orientation, shared by Prieto and Negrin, hinged on two closely related aims: take the restoration of the bourgeois republican State as far as possible, and reach a compromise with the rebellious generals, with the blessing

¹² *Guerra y Revolución en España*, Vol. 1, p. 259.

of the great powers. On 31 August 1937, there is a note of the conversation he had that day with Negrin and Giral, after another with Prieto, in which he writes: 'I went over my *former* points of view: Peace, Republic, and a Pact to guarantee that there will be neither Bolshevism nor dictatorship in Spain. If the *essential* of republican institutions is preserved, *many concessions* are possible. It is necessary in these conversations to assume the role of *collaborators* for peace, in Spain as in Europe, and slip the word to the French government, on the basis of the general convenience of peace. I think we ended in agreement.' Azaña is here referring to conversations Negrin was to have in Geneva with representatives of various powers, mainly the French and English, taking advantage of a League of Nations meeting. On 30 September he had a meeting with the cabinet. The diary reads: 'I told them to go to the Cortes in the knowledge that this government, and the policy it represents, has the support of the President of the Republic. This government means for me that the anarchy is over, and that the whole world can be made to come to reason, firstly by argument and if that is not enough by the force of law. The only weakness I see in the general policy of the government is that it is not advancing as quickly as would be desirable. I stressed the need for untiring pursuit of compensation for possessions, services, etc, expropriated by the State, and I repeated to the government my decision not to sign anything tending to confirm these expropriations.'¹³

The Communist Response

The Memoirs at various points record the communists' favourable reaction to his policies. On 31 May, soon after the Largo Caballero government had been dissolved and the Negrin government formed, Azaña wrote: 'They tell me that the communists support me enthusiastically. Especially Díaz, though I was very hard with him on the day of the crisis. He says I should be the leader of them all . . .' The occasion referred to was a meeting of the Popular Front leaders to resolve the crisis of the Largo Caballero government. The republicans and reformists in the socialist party here attempted to make the PCE appear responsible for the elimination of Largo Caballero from the government: he was insisting that if he was to form a new government he should also be minister of war, and the socialists and republicans accepted *on condition* that the communists agreed. The PCE, however, took upon itself the responsibility for forming a government in which the UGR and the CNT were not represented. Instead of Largo Caballero it accepted Prieto as Minister of War, though he was already in agreement with Azaña—as the latter's Memoirs show—that a compromise peace should be sought, and guaranteed by what Azaña called the 'five power pact' (England, France, USSR, Germany and Italy). The basis for this should of course be a bourgeois regime preserving the republican form, but making 'many concessions' to the rebels. Azaña and Prieto knew that this was also the line of the Soviet government and so they were not risking much by a formal acceptance of Caballero's conditions.

¹³ Manuel Azaña, *Obras*, Ediciones Oasis, Mexico 1968 (the Memoirs were unpublished until their inclusion in this series), Vol. IV, pp. 761, 808.

Once *caballerismo* and anarcho-syndicalism had been virtually put out of action with the aid of the Communist Party, the policy of the reformist leadership of the Socialist Party was to undercut the latter's positions in every sphere: the State apparatus, the army, the trade unions, etc. The PCP might have given up, for more than 'a little while', any idea of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'; but the reformists—in close alliance with the republicans—had not given up the aim of restoring the 'dictatorship' of the bourgeoisie. This was their ultimate goal.

The *caballeristas* themselves, meanwhile, had also adapted to Stalin's strategy, without giving up their own ideas and aims, the main weakness of which was still imprecision, vagueness—in short, the lack of a coherent policy. As they reflected the will of the mass of the proletariat, they were for preserving the socialist content of the revolution, but they had no programme to give form to this content and no effective tactics to struggle for it in the highly complex situation of the civil war. They attempted to assume the leading role in the republican—labour bloc, but in practice they tailed the Communist Party on some questions and anarcho-syndicalism on others. But these were precisely the characteristics which made *caballerismo* the ideal grouping to take the front of the stage in the first phase of the drama. Together with its revolutionary reputation, and especially the myth of Caballero as the 'Spanish Lenin', the vagueness of its beliefs made *caballerismo* representative of the most general expression of the revolution: neither *bolshevik* revolution nor *libertarian* revolution, but the Revolution of the Proletariat, with capital letters and no adjectives. Its largely syndical nature facilitated an accord with the CNT. On the other hand, a group which had no coherent politics nor a well-structured organization was very useful to those who had both. For the proletariat, it was a guarantee of the revolution to have Largo Caballero at the head of the government. For Azaña and Prieto, and for Stalin and his representatives in Spain too, Caballero's premiership guaranteed that the revolution would collaborate in its own correction and in the restoration of the bourgeois democratic republican State. For the anarcho-syndicalists it offered the possibility of maintaining the enclaves of 'libertarian communism' created in the areas where they were strongest. For Caballero himself and for his followers, the alliance with the bourgeois republicans was a kind of wartime manoeuvre to take into account the international conditions in which the Spanish revolution was unfolding, while at the same time keeping their proletarian purity.

Caballero's Course

The *caballeristas* began by attempting to reconcile all parties to them, but they came into conflict with each and every one. The further the restoration of the republican State was taken, the greater an obstacle they became to taking such a restoration to its logical conclusion. There were growing pressures on Largo Caballero, not only from the PCP, the Comintern delegates and the Soviet advisers, but even from Stalin himself, who did not hesitate to intervene directly in the internal political problems of Spain. A letter of 21 December 1936, signed by Stalin, Molotov and Vorochilov, was addressed to Largo Caballero

by way of 'a little friendly advice'. Part of the advice was: 'to bring the small and medium urban bourgeoisie over to the side of the government', 'not to reject the leaders of the republican parties but to draw them in and involve them in the common struggle of the government'; 'in particular ensuring that Azaña and his group support the government, doing everything possible to help allay their doubts'. 'This is the more necessary', Stalin added, 'to prevent the enemies of Spain from seeing it as a communist republic, and so forestall any open intervention, which is the most serious danger facing republican Spain.' Another 'suggestion' was that 'it is very possible that the parliamentary road is a better way of carrying out revolution in Spain than it was in Russia'.¹⁴ Caballero in effect replied that he was already carrying out this advice, which in Spanish meant that the advice was unnecessary. He took the liberty of making one objection: 'In reply to your allusion to the subject, I should point out that whatever fate may have in store for parliamentary institutions, they have few enthusiastic supporters, even among the republicans let alone in our ranks.'

Stalin stepped up the pressure. In late February 1937, he sent more 'advice' to Caballero, and this time it was urgent: the communist and socialist parties must be unified immediately. Caballero refused.¹⁵ As Caballero stubbornly refused to act as a good secretary of a section of the Comintern should, he had to be thrown out, which is what happened to bad secretaries of sections of the Comintern. The operation was carried out, as recorded above, in late May.

The CNT and the POUM adapted to the international conditions, especially those imposed by the USSR, with reservations similar to those of the *caballeristas*. But they were stronger by virtue of having hardened to political positions less easily reconciled with the restoration of the republican state. The 'libertarian revolution' which the anarcho-syndicalists had begun putting into practice in Catalonia and Aragon, and were trying to extend elsewhere in republican territory, was absolutely incompatible with the restoration of the bourgeois democratic republican state; but it was also incompatible with the most elementary military and economic requirements of war.

'Cleaning up' Trotskyists and Anarchists

For the POUM the socialist nature of the Spanish revolution was evident, and they were for establishing the power of the proletariat. Their forces, though, were very small and virtually confined to Catalonia, where the influence of anarcho-syndicalism was overwhelming in the main proletarian centres. At the same time they were harassed by the Communist Party's implacable hostility. During the early part of the Spanish civil war the physical extermination of the opposition was going on in the USSR, and Stalin and the Comintern came to look on the POUM as an 'agent of fascism' to be exterminated, like Trotskyism. By denouncing Stalin's crimes against the Old Guard of the Bolsheviks, the

¹⁴ *Guerra y Revolución en España*, Vol. II, p. 101-3, prints the full texts of Stalin's letter and Caballero's reply.

¹⁵ See Araquistain's revelation of this in *Peirats, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 375-6, n. 138.

POUM became the dictator's *bête noire*. In November the PCE insisted to the other parties of the Popular Front that the POUM should not be represented in the Madrid Defence Council. The socialist Albar informed the POUM leaders that Rosenberg had vetoed the idea.¹⁶ On 17 December *Pravda* wrote: 'So far as Catalonia is concerned, the cleaning up of Trotskyists and anarchists has begun and it will be carried out with the same energy as in the USSR.'¹⁷ The PCE press began a virulent campaign, with the constant incantation that the Trotskyists and 'undisciplined elements' (in Spain they could not openly say 'anarchists' as *Pravda* did) were as much 'enemies of the people' as the fascists. The campaign was intensified up to the May events in Barcelona, when there was an armed confrontation between government forces, mainly of the PCE, and the POUM, with a section of the anarcho-syndicalists. On the basis of German documents, the PCE maintained that the events were mainly caused by the POUM leaders, who were inspired by Franco agents. But as Broué correctly says, these documents do not prove that the agents were using the POUM or only the POUM. No *agents provocateurs* could have been successful if the objective conditions for the confrontation had not already been created,¹⁸ which was what the campaign directed against the POUM from Moscow had done.

It is my opinion that the POUM's political positions at this period were an invitation to the provocations being set up for it, and which it was well aware of. On 14 March 1937, Nin argued that 'although the relationship of forces is less favourable than in the early months of the revolution, it is still such that the proletariat could *now* take power without recourse to armed insurrection'.¹⁹ This was quite wrong. The sections of the proletariat which might hypothetically have been in agreement with Nin in that situation—certain sections of *caballerismo* and anarcho-syndicalism, apart from the POUM itself—*could only have tried to seize power by armed struggle against the forces of the PCE* (and of the republicans and socialists who agreed with it). And the PCE controlled a key part of the army. To pose the question as Nin did was to head for civil war within the republican camp, which could only hasten the victory of the fascist counter-revolution. On 28 September 1937 Trotsky wrote: 'The Negrin-Stalin government is a quasi-democratic obstacle on the road to revolution, but it is also an obstacle, however unsure and temporary, on the road to fascism. Tomorrow or the day after the Spanish proletariat will perhaps be able to sweep it aside and take power. But although it might only be a passive aid, if it were swept aside today its removal could only be used by fascism.'²⁰ This perceptive judgement was perfectly relevant to the situation in March 1937—though soon after Trotsky took other positions which were not so perceptive. After the bloody May days the last, notorious phase of the persecution against the POUM began.²¹ I must add that the repression of the POUM, and especially the terrible assassination of

¹⁶ See Broué, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Quoted in Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 1961, p. 363.

¹⁸ Broué, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Reproduced in *La Batalla*, July–August 1966.

²⁰ Trotsky, *Writings*, III, pp. 528–9.

²¹ Among recent writings on these events, Juan Andrade's article in *La Batalla*, June 1967, is worth study.

Andres Nin, is the blackest page in the history of the Spanish Communist Party, which was an accomplice in the crime committed by Stalin's secret service. The PCE has still not made a self-criticism.

The 'Negrin Phase'

The whole evolution of the internal situation in 'republican territory' during the civil war was conditioned by these basic factors, and by the contradictions and conflicts resulting from them. There were two marked phases in this evolution: the first lasting until the fall of Largo Caballero in May 1937, and the second from then until the defeat—the 'Negrin phase'. In the first period, the front of Azafia republicans, reformist socialists and communists managed to pull the revolution back into essentially bourgeois democratic channels and restore the republican State on that basis, with the popular regular army as their main instrument. In the second period, the front of Azafia republicans and reformist socialists concentrated on methodically squeezing the communists out of positions in the State apparatus, especially the army, police and special services, and in the economic sphere. They put still further limitations, in general political terms, on the progressive aspects of the republic; and prepared the final capitulation. The Comintern line on the Spanish revolution in the end came out against the supreme objective for which it was supposedly imposed: the winning of the war. Nonetheless, it had made it possible for the republic to put up such a prolonged and stubborn resistance.

This positive effect stemmed above all from the fact that the Comintern and the PCE understood the decisive nature of the military problem from the very beginning. With the help of Soviet technicians and communist cadre from elsewhere, the PCE concentrated all its efforts on solving this problem. Its structure, its mode of operation and the formation of its cadre suited it particularly well for this task. The PCE was a very strong organizing force. Because it had been shaped according to the semi-military bolshevik model, the PCE was able to turn rapidly into the *military party* of the Republic, as the organizing nucleus of an army which had to be created quickly, and without which the libertarian experiments, the republican State, parties, trade unions and all the rest were doomed to extinction. The masses, moved by basic common understanding, saw independently of all preference for union or party that there was no hope for them without an army, without a single command, discipline, war economy, without, in the PCE's phrase, an 'iron' unity in the van and the rearguard, and without subordinating every other consideration to the urgent need to defeat the advancing enemy troops. The forces of the Communist Party and its chief auxiliary, the JSU (United Socialist Youth), grew very rapidly in the early months of the war, as did its political influence and authority. This was not because the proletariat thought the PCE 'more revolutionary' than the *caballeristas* or anarcho-syndicalists, but because it was more evidently capable of confronting the crucial problems of the situation. Of course the prestige the USSR gained through its aid to the republic had quite an influence in the rise of the PCE, but the main factor is the one I have just pointed out. It was symptomatic that the membership and influence of the party grew relatively little in the

UGT unions, not to mention those of the CNT: that is, within the organized working class. Many petty-bourgeois elements came into the ranks of the PCF, attracted by the party's fame as the defender of order, legality and small property. Above all, the PCF received an influx—much of it through the JSU—of youth with no formation in the unions, and traditional workers' organizations, attracted by the party's military virtues, and by a simplified ideology in which revolution was identified with a mixture of anti-fascism and patriotism.

The PCF therefore made an exceptional contribution to the organization of the republican army, the Comintern created the International Brigades and the Soviet Union was the main supplier of arms to the Republic, as well as helping with the best military specialists. If war was only a technical and military undertaking, it would be difficult to fault the contribution of the PCF, Comintern and USSR to the struggle of the Spanish people against fascism (if we lay aside for the moment the question of the amount of arms supplied to the Republic by the Soviet government). But it has been well known since the time of Clausewitz that 'war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.'²² Particularly, it might be added, a civil war. The PCF's position that 'if the war is not won, no revolution is possible' testifies to that; but the phrase that always went with the first, 'when the war is won the revolution is made', was ambiguity itself. As we have already seen, each of the political and trade union organizations in the republican camp had its own idea of the 'revolution', and fought for it, in *continuity* with its previous policy, from the first day of the civil war.

'War' was not an autonomous part of the total struggle, which could set aside the confrontation between the three main 'variations' of revolution: proletarian, bourgeois democratic and bourgeois liberal revolution. The struggle at the front, and the directly military apparatus, were closely connected with particular types of social and political organization. The whole future of the Republic would be strongly conditioned by the type of social and political regime prevailing during the civil war. The armed forces established by the PCF, the Comintern and Soviet aid were basically serving two political objectives: military resistance to the rebels, and ensuring that the 'bourgeois democratic' type of republic acceptable to the bourgeois republicans, and supposedly acceptable to the 'western democracies' too, would prevail. But as the instrument of the second objective, the armed forces of the PCF, Comintern and USSR came into conflict with the reality of the revolution and with the majority of the proletariat, who saw this reality as their greatest gain. Such a conflict was bound to have a definite effect of weakening the military power of the republic. The two political objectives of the armed forces were not complementary but contradictory. The second outweighed the positive effects of the former. Events were to demonstrate this very quickly.

²² Carl von Clausewitz, *On war*, 1873, p. 12.

PCE's Armed Hegemony

In the early months of 1937, the *caballeristas*, anarcho-syndicalists and the POUM became convinced that their adaptation to the Moscow line had had no positive effect on the attitude of the 'western democracies', and had instead constantly pulled back the initial 'proletarian content' of the revolution and strengthened the PCE, reformist socialists and bourgeois republicans in the political and military structure. They were particularly disturbed by the hegemonic position the PCE had gained in the army. The terror unleashed by Stalin on the opposition in the USSR was the element which finally combined with strictly Spanish questions to bring this disquiet to a head. The Stalinist terror seemed to the *caballeristas*, anarcho-syndicalists and the POUM to be a premonition of what awaited them if final victory was won in the civil war under communist hegemony. The position the PCE had at once adopted was not designed to calm their fears. Timed to coincide with the impact of the Moscow trials, a call was issued for the extermination of the POUM, and the *caballeristas* and anarchists who had denounced Stalin's crimes were accused of being enemies of the Soviet Union and accomplices of fascism. Blindly believing in the Soviet leaders, the Spanish communists never doubted that 'enemies of the people' and 'fascist spies' were being eliminated in Moscow. When a life and death struggle was being waged against fascism in Spain, when the Soviet Union was the only power helping the Spanish republic, the Spanish communists reasoned that only other 'enemies of the people' or 'secret agents of fascism' could come out in defence of those Stalin was suppressing. Once the virus of mistrust, if not of hatred, was introduced, political and doctrinal differences among the organizations and groups representing the revolutionary proletariat reached breaking point. Meanwhile, the bourgeois republican parties and the PSOE reformists observed a discreet silence about the drama taking place in Moscow. The breach that opened between the PCE and the other tendencies in the revolutionary proletariat made Azaña and Prieto arbiters of the situation.

The May Crisis

The 'May crisis' (1937) was the result of this whole process, *caballerismo* and anarcho-syndicalism were excluded from the government, and power was left in the hands of the reformist socialists, the bourgeois republicans and the PCE. Police repression against the POUM began at once, followed by a political offensive against Largo Caballero and his party. While the PCE denounced them as accomplices of the POUM, the Prieto group was manoeuvring to oust the *caballeristas* from their positions in the PSOE and the UGR. At the same time, the most moderate and reformist elements were strengthening their positions in the CNT. A decisive step forward was therefore made in the difficult task entrusted to the Comintern by Stalin, that of integrating the Spanish revolution back into the 'bourgeois democratic' framework which it 'should not have' left.

The main beneficiary of the operation, however, was not the PCE which had carried it out, but the bloc of bourgeois republicans and

reformist socialists who occupied the key posts in the government, and in the administration, the army, foreign policy and the economy. Of course the PCE controlled a major part of the army, but given that the supreme principle of its policy—Stalin's policy—was to maintain the alliance with the reformist bourgeois bloc, it was absolutely out of the question for the PCE to use its military strength against its confirmed allies. Prieto, in charge of the Ministry of Defence, could anyway set about methodically reducing the specific weight of the communists in the command of the armed forces and the Commissariat. Meanwhile the government's general policy was rapidly moving to the right on the domestic front, and orienting towards a negotiated settlement of the war. It was definitely Azaña's policy which was gaining ground.

The great social revolutions, the Spanish revolution among them, either advance decisively to their ultimate conclusion, or they retreat equally decisively, and lead to counter-revolution. Long before the fascist troops broke into Barcelona and Madrid, counter-revolution was silently being established in republican territory. The longer the civil war dragged on, with its wake of deprivation and sacrifice, the more the military relationship of forces changed in the enemy's favour (for they were receiving much more aid from Germany and Italy than the Republic was receiving from the USSR), the more defeatism and despair spread among the petty-bourgeois layers of town and country, infecting groups of the proletariat too. Azaña's and Prieto's capitulationist policy gained a broader and broader social base, while the last ditch resistance advocated by the communists met an increasingly sceptical response. The PCE desperately tried to interrupt this deterioration of the situation, but neither propaganda, nor its attempts to strengthen the army or increase arms production, could fill the void left by the evaporation of what had in the early months been the decisive reservoir of the people's combativity: its enthusiasm for revolution. The most radical section of the proletariat felt rejected and deceived, and within the Communist Party itself, doubt and vacillation appeared behind an optimistic facade. Critical voices were raised against the policy of alliance with the bourgeois republican leaders and the PSOE reformists, and the idea was raised that the only way out of the situation was for the party to take the conduct of the war completely into its own hands. These tendencies were associated with a conviction rapidly gaining ground among the communists that the hopes placed in aid from the 'western democracies' had proved totally illusory. Why such reverence for the Spanish personification of the Anglo-French 'democratic bourgeoisie' and the 'social democracy' which were betraying the Spanish people? Why, for the sake of an alliance with the capitulationists, should they sacrifice the remaining possibilities for a revolutionary war policy, which could revive the strength and combativity of the proletariat, impose iron discipline and use existing resources to the full?

'We want these states to help us'

Such ideas were even echoed in one of the central organs of the PCE, *Mundo Obrero*, which was published in Madrid and was therefore not directly controlled by the party leadership (their centre was in Barcelona,

and the official organ there was *Frente Rojo*). In an editorial of 23 March 1938, *Mundo Obrero* wrote, 'We cannot, as another paper does, say that the only possible outcome of the war is for Spain to be neither fascist nor communist, because this is how France wants it (. . .) The Spanish people will win though the capitalists oppose us.' The reaction of the PCE leadership was immediate. In a letter signed by Jose Diaz and published in *Frente Rojo* on 30 March, the *Mundo Obrero* editorial received a severe reprimand: 'The statement that "the only possible outcome of the war is for Spain to be neither fascist nor communist", is absolutely correct and fully corresponds to the position of our party.' As for the theory that 'the Spanish people will win though the capitalists oppose us', 'this', wrote Jose Diaz, 'also has nothing to do with either the situation or the policy of our party and of the Communist International.' 'In my report to the November Plenum of the Central Committee', the general secretary continued, 'I stated that "there are grounds on which all the democratic States can unite and act together. The grounds are the defence of our very existence against the common aggressor, fascism: the grounds of defence against the war which threatens us all." When I spoke of "all democratic States" I was not thinking only of the Soviet Union, where there is a socialist democracy, but also of France, England, Czechoslovakia, United States etc., which are democratic countries, but capitalist ones. We want these states to help us; we think they would be defending their own interests by helping us; we struggle to make them understand this, and we are asking for their help. The position you take in your article is very different, and quite incorrect (. . .) It would inevitably make us narrow the front of our struggle again, just when it is necessary to broaden it.'²³

It had really been evident for a long time that democratic capitalism would not lift a finger to help the Spanish republic, however much it 'broadened' its political meaning—ever since Blum, a few days after the Spanish civil war had broken out, bowed down to the attitude of the British Conservative government. Now, when this was crystal clear, the Comintern, on Jose Diaz's authority, was still indulging in the fond illusion—and spreading it among the Spanish troops—that France, England and the United States would help the Spanish people. It went on spreading such illusions (and basing the whole policy of the Spanish section on them) despite the fact that as Soviet historians recognize, 'from the end of 1937 it was well known that the fascist States were increasingly plotting with the United States, England and France against the Spanish republic'.²⁴ In fact, a fortnight after *Mundo Obrero* was reprimanded, England reached an agreement with Mussolini for the withdrawal of the Italian 'volunteers' once Franco had achieved victory; in mid-June the French government closed the frontier in the Pyrenees; and September brought Munich. Meanwhile, the 'broadening' of the front advocated in the letter took the form of a formal renunciation (thereby recognizing the actual situation) of the original revolutionary content of the struggle. As G. Jackson correctly puts it, Negrin's '13 points' which the PCE supported, 'pre-

²³ *Tres años de lucha*, pp. 461-3.

²⁴ *Vremennaja Istoria*, Vol. IX, pp. 340-50. (*World History*, a series of ten volumes by the most distinguished Soviet historians, 1956-1962.)

sented to world opinion the image of a regime whose aims and methods were similar to those of the Western democracies. It was a supreme effort to convince the Western governments of their own stake in the survival of the Republic.²⁵

Unlike the Comintern, the 'Western governments' applied classical criteria and found the best representative of Spanish capitalism to be not the Negrin government but the Franco government. 'Democratic' capitalism would be content only when the Spanish proletariat was totally defeated, and that meant the overthrow of a republic which for the best part of a decade had been proving that it could not play the historical role of a 'bourgeois democratic republic'. The 'Western governments' might even be impressed by the unreal picture of the situation in the Spanish republic which Negrin and the PCE tried to present, but they were organically incompatible with the reality behind the picture—the reality of a revolutionary proletariat, which would rise up at the first opportunity. The dénouement of the drama came about in the way class struggle and the classes involved (not the Comintern's dogma of the inevitability of a 'bourgeois democratic' stage) had posed the question in 1936: *fascism or communism* was the issue (taking 'communism' to mean what the whole world meant when it referred to Spain: the particular form of proletarian revolution, with all its unique, Spanish characteristics, which had swept the country like a hurricane in the second half of 1936).

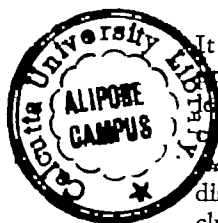
Demoralization and Capitulation

The only function of the reduction of the '13 points' to 3, and the political and ideological concessions Negrin and the PCE made in the last months of the war to 'ease' the 'national unification' of 'Spanish patriots' of both sides, was to convince the most optimistic that the republic was on the brink of disaster. The 'capitulationist party' became the strongest on republican territory. Hence the catastrophic downfall of Catalonia, and the success of the Casado plot, leading to the final defeat. The PCE attempted to react at the last moment, putting aside all respect for its bourgeois and reformist allies and all concern for 'democratic' capitalism, but it was too late. All the heroism and sacrifice of the past three years came to nothing, together with a policy which from the first day of the civil war had turned its back on the essential dictates of the reality of the Spanish revolution, in order to fit the dictates of Stalin's international strategy.

The PCE's subjection to this strategy was an obstacle to the *full* development of the fighting forces, creative initiatives and ability to perform miracles which every great social revolution has within it. *Within the limits* imposed by this condition, the party, as I described, acted in exemplary fashion in the organization of the army, in maintaining a fighting spirit, and exalting the struggle as one against fascism and for national liberation. This was absolutely essential. But the *full* development of the potential of the forces overwhelmingly

²⁵ G. Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War 1931-1939*, 1965, p. 454.

required that the proletariat, the decisive revolutionary force, should at all times be clear that the life and death struggle they confronted was the struggle which would free them from capitalist slavery. This should not have been presented as some promise of a far-off stage, but as the proclamation and development of the socialist content the revolution had in practice shown since the July days—as the transformation of this element into a new order and new institutions, and above all as the establishment of the *power of the proletariat*. All the other elements of the revolutionary war were important and should not have been underestimated, but only on the condition that they were subordinated to the socialist nature of the revolution. On this basis the proletariat could have understood the need to respect small property which did not exploit the labour of others, and the need for alliance with non-exploiting layers of the petty bourgeoisie and collaboration with non-proletarian political groups prepared to join in the struggle because of other aspects of the war (nationalism, the struggle against fascism, etc.). On this basis, the defence of national independence against Italian and German intervention would have meant more to the proletariat than traditional patriotism: it would have meant the defence of its own liberation.



It was the more imperative to recognize the absolute priority of the proletarian, socialist nature of the revolution, strengthen it at every level, and base the solution of all the problems of the war on it, because, it must be stressed, *its essential nature had already been defined in reality by the masses themselves*, and every retreat could only create distrust among them, weaken their morale, and bring them to the conclusion that the restoration of the Azad republic was not worth such enormous sacrifices. The spirit which made the defence of Madrid possible was the spirit of the proletarian revolution, and the only chance of victory lay in its preservation and development. It was therefore necessary to create revolutionary proletarian power, which would leave no room for doubt about the aims of the struggle, and would unwaveringly start to deal with the tasks which the needs of war placed in the forefront: the organization of the army and the production of arms, provisions etc; and (something which was inconceivable to the government of the restoration of the bourgeois democratic republican State, increasingly dominated by Azaña, Prieto and company) the large scale organization of revolutionary guerrilla forces in the area occupied by the rebel generals. The political characteristics being assumed by the government were reflected in a 'conventional' view of how to wage the war. But if the organization of a regular army, and trench warfare with big detachments, were necessary in the actual conditions of the Spanish civil war, guerrilla struggle was equally necessary and possible. It simply needed a different kind of power. This failure of the republic must be stressed, because it was quite influential in the final outcome of the struggle. Large scale guerrilla action, for which there were favourable conditions in wide areas of the country, would not only have reinforced the military strength of the Republic and the likelihood of victory, but would even, in the eventuality of a defeat in 'conventional warfare', have laid the basis for continuing the armed struggle for a long time and linking up with the resistance to Hitler during the world war.

A United Revolutionary Party

The failure of the anarcho-syndicalists to understand the question of the State and the tactical and organizational weaknesses of *caballerismo* were of course a big obstacle to organizing the kind of revolutionary power which civil war conditions inexorably required. But if the Communist Party, which had a better understanding of the urgency of these conditions, had based its criticisms of anarcho-syndicalism and *caballerismo* on the position of proletarian revolution and the needs of a *revolutionary* war, not in the name of petty-bourgeois democracy, it would have met with a strong response from the mass of anarcho-syndicalists and *caballeristas* and from many of their best cadre. Durruti was not an exception, far from it. War and revolution were proving very rapid teachers. In effect, important sections of anarcho-syndicalism and *caballerismo* quickly understood the need for State power, an army, discipline, etc. They would have understood still more quickly and thoroughly if the PCF had not counterposed these tasks to the socialist content of the revolution. In the early months of the war there were great possibilities for uniting communists, *caballeristas*, Poumists and anarcho-syndicalists in one great revolutionary party, or at least in close collaboration in building the proletarian State. But what became of these possibilities depended above all on the PCF firmly opting for the revolution and abandoning its dogmatic models. Such a party and such a State would have had to be quite independent of the Comintern and the Soviet State. Only if this was the case could they be accepted by other revolutionary sections of the Spanish proletariat.

It need scarcely be added that none of this was possible given the nature of the Comintern and of Stalin's policy. Even supposing that the PCF had taken the road I have described in 1936, the international situation of the hypothetical socialist republic would probably have been desperate, in the face of opposition by Stalin and the Comintern. Of course it could have done certain things which the Popular Front republic, pledged to Stalin's policy and a prisoner of its own petty-bourgeois nature, could not. It could have aided the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, by its own example and by direct appeal (in the second half of 1936 the spirit of May and June was still strong in France). It would have similarly called on Stalin. To refuse aid to the Spanish proletariat, when its struggle found an immensely sympathetic response even in the social democratic labour movement, would have been tantamount to dealing a terrible blow at the Soviet Union's prestige with workers of all countries. Although Stalin's international strategy was essentially based on manipulation of the inter-imperialist contradictions, not on the development of the world revolutionary movement, it could not dispense with the support of the labour movement. It even needed this in order to manipulate the contradictions (for example, to secure the French alliance and reach an agreement with England, it required the respective working classes to exert 'pressure' on their own bourgeoisies). A Spanish socialist republic of the kind described, independent of Stalin and the Comintern—which it would have to be—would have had possession of the weapon Stalin most feared: the weapon of open criticism, and the ability to denounce to the world proletariat in no uncertain terms the behaviour

of the Moscow government should it refuse aid to the Spanish revolution. It is not unlikely that in the light of such a risk, 'Moscow would have had to supply arms, perhaps at a more reasonable price'²⁶, as Trotsky put it. But viewing the problem in the light of subsequent events, in particular the German-Soviet pact and the condemnation and abandonment of the Yugoslavian revolution in 1948, it is equally likely that Stalin would have reacted by denouncing the alliance of our hypothetical heretic Spanish communists with the anarcho-syndicalists, Caballero and the POUm, as a sinister plot, organized by the Gestapo under Trotsky's direction, against the USSR and the Western democracies, to prevent them from coming to the aid of a legal, constitutional, parliamentary Spanish republic.

New Soviet Historians

The only aim of this a-historic speculation, which I shall not continue, is to emphasize essential aspects of what even some Soviet historians describe as 'Stalin's betrayal of the Spanish republic'.²⁷ These historians agree with some from the West that Stalin's military aid to the republic was inadequate. My foray into hypothesis is an attempt to point out the possibilities this 'betrayal' forestalled, by preventing the creation of
 ✓ a revolutionary power in the republican area, which would have greatly increased the ability of the Spanish people to struggle. Stalin's policy, as applied by the Comintern and the PCP, gave hegemony of the republic over to bourgeois and reformist forces which were moving towards compromise with the enemy. It did not even respect the legal order and sovereignty on which the respectability of the Republican State in the eyes of the 'Western democracies' was supposedly based. Stalin's secret service in fact operated in the republic as if it were the Republic of Outer Mongolia.

The most scandalous, but not the only case involving them, was the assassination of Nin after the failure of the attempt to use the POUm leader to stage a Spanish version of the 'Moscow trials'. The historian G. Jackson has written: 'The Nin case was a terrible moral blow to the credit of the Negrin government. Two months after taking office with strong pledges for the restoration of personal security and justice, the Prime Minister had been forced to tolerate the Communist outrage or to fight back, at the risk of being destroyed as Largo Caballero had been destroyed.'²⁸ His view is correct, with the exception that it was not a
 ✓ 'Communist outrage' but an outrage against communism, more than against Negrin's prestige.

These Soviet historians also single out very clearly the main aspect of Stalin's 'betrayal': the strangling of the revolution and the dependence the republic was forced into were not even compensated by as much aid as Franco's generals received from Germany and Italy, despite the

²⁶ *Essays*, III, p. 345.

²⁷ Especially Alexandre Nekritch, 22 June 1941, published in Russian in 1965 (French edition by Grassiet, Paris, is called *L'Armée Rouge Assassine*), which provoked intense discussion and found considerable support in Moscow academic circles in 1966, though there has since been a strong Stalinist campaign against it.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 338.

fact that Soviet arms were well known to be paid for in advance and in gold through the Banco de España. The question of 'inadequate' supplies cannot be finally clarified until the relevant Soviet archives are opened. Only then can we know how far this inadequacy was due to the technical difficulties the aid encountered (because of the distance, the blockade, etc.), and how far to 'planned' inadequacy, following the dictates of foreign policy. What seems certain is that this last aspect did exist. Stalin *could not*, without radically changing his international strategy, help the Spanish republic more than was compatible with his policy of alliance with the 'Western democracies'. And they could by no means accept that this aid should go so far as to give a decisive military advantage to the republic. This was well understood by Azáña and by the republic's ambassador in Moscow (Marcelino Pascua, a member of the Socialist Party). Azáña wrote in his note book after a conversation with Pascua on 13 August 1937: 'I said—It seems to me that contrary to the general belief here, there *is* a restriction on Russian co-operation, and it is not the possibility of a blockade, but the official friendship with England. I do not think the ussa will do anything for us that would jeopardize their relations with England, or compromise their position in the policy of the Western allies. Pascua replied—that is undoubtedly the case. For the ussa the Spanish question is a pawn.'²⁹ Stalin helped the Spanish republic, not so that it would win, but so that it could resist long enough to reach a compromise solution acceptable to the 'Western democracies' within the framework of a system of alliances against Hitler.

This conclusion, drawn from the facts and from an analysis of Stalin's foreign policy, at the time seemed to be the most monstrous slander of all time to the communists, and to many anti-fascist Spaniards who were not communists. But subsequent events have clearly shown that Stalin would not hesitate to sacrifice to reasons of State not just the possibility but the actual reality of a victorious revolution, even when it was close to the Soviet frontier and there were no 'technical' difficulties in the way of providing the necessary aid against imperialist intervention. The case of the Greek resistance at the end of the Second World War is evidence enough. Between the two world wars, Stalin's Spanish policy, as applied by the Comintern and the PCP, was the most obvious case of the subjugation of a revolution actually taking place to the reasons of state of the Soviet Union.

²⁹ *Memorias de Azáña*, Vol. IV, p. 734.

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Introduction to Mannoni

The observation of wild children, re-captured after years in the forest or jungle, provides the most elementary disproof of the myth of 'human nature'. These mirrors, in which man strives to recognize his own essence, exhibit none of those 'human' characteristics which he flatters himself are his by 'nature'. The philosophical anthropologist finds himself confronted, not with natural man, in all the purity of his true origin, the veneer of civilization and culture stripped away, but with the grotesque travesty of a wolf, a bear or a sheep, mis-shapen, furry, running on all fours, howling, snarling and bleating. As Lucien Malson points out, in his book on *Wolf Children*,¹ there is no better demonstration that man has no nature, only a history, and that biological heredity has no psychological counterpart. (This is not to rule out, of course, the existence of innate capacities, as Chomsky argues: indeed, the plasticity of wild children, able to grow up as wolves or sheep, within their limits, seems to support this thesis.) The forms of human psychology—whose content are combinations of social practices to be specified differentially for each individual—are determined by the structures of society and history. A-social and a-historical feral man—savage in the true sense—is fated to be inhuman, an anomaly in the animal kingdom. The biological man is no more than the material support of social man; we can no more understand 'man' through biology or physiology, genetics or behaviourism, than we can understand language through phonetics.

The most valuable account of a recaptured 'savage'—Victor of Aveyron—remains that written a century and a half ago by Jean Itard, published as an annexe to Malson's book. Itard, the leading expert of his day on the education of deaf-mutes, was a disciple of Condillac, and it was in the methodical spirit of his mentor that he set about re-educating his savage. As Octave Mannoni shows, in the article which follows, his enterprise was doomed to failure, precisely because of the rigidity with which Itard conceived the encounter as one between culture (himself, the knowing tutor) and nature (the ignorant, un-tutored Victor). He himself, he assumed, had nothing to learn and Victor everything; his task was simply to impart what he knew methodically and systematically. Itard was absolutely unable to understand the (false) problem of how to effect the transition in Victor from

¹ Lucien Malson, *Wolf Children* and Jean Itard, *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*, NLB 1972.

an animal psychology—not an unskilled formation, in the slightest—to the psychology of an Enlightenment Frenchman. Octave Mannoni was himself trained as a philosopher, then worked in Madagascar as an anthropologist and later became a psycho-analyst, a member of the *École freudienne de Paris*, headed by Jacques Lacan. He is the author of *Freud: the Theory of the Unconscious*,² an intellectual biography which treats the development of psychoanalytic theory within a Lacanian perspective, strikingly different from that employed by Ernest Jones in his classic work.

Mannoni is able to show both the value of Itard's account as a description of a teaching strategy and the reasons for its inevitable failure. Indeed, as Mannoni observes, the reasons for the failure are so evident that it is not so much a mystery—the ideological background in its turn is all too clear—as a scandal that the same strategies dominate so much educational practice even today, as teacher after teacher re-enacts the dedication, missionary zeal, perseverance and final frustration of Itard. Society requires its myths both of the recalcitrance and the credulity of children, myths which, as Mannoni demonstrates, have their basis in the mechanism of the unconscious (especially that of 'disavowal') and the projection on to the children of the teacher's fantasies. The interest of Itard's account of the re-education of Victor lies in the light it throws both on the myth of the child of nature and on the myth of the teacher with the civilizing mission.

² Octave Mannoni, *Freud: the Theory of the Unconscious*, NLB 1972.

G.

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Itard and his Savage

The remarkable story of the re-education of the 'savage' of Aveyron, and the pedagogic methods devised by his teacher, Dr Itard, still influence many of the techniques used in the training of backward children today, more than a century and a half later. The situation is paradoxical in several respects; first and foremost because, although it is possible to discover in Itard's two papers on the subject¹ what can be learned from the failure of the experiment, that is, what Itard should have learned from it—what could have been Itard's re-education by his savage—it is not this that has been retained by later researchers. Rather they have kept certain aspects of his methods, themselves posed in an arbitrary way and derived *a priori* from philosophic concepts current at the time, principally those of Condillac. Relying on these concepts from the start, Itard is seen drafting his re-education plan in advance like a schoolmaster working out his timetable, laid out in five numbered sections and deduced (as he wrote in so many words) from the 'doctrine' to which he subscribed.

Another point which we may well find astonishing is the way in which re-education procedures devised by Itard have, over the years, infiltrated education proper, particularly that of very young children, doubtless as a result of an oversimplified theory of intellectual *development*. This theory can be found elsewhere in the more recent concept of 'intelligence quotient'. It tempts one to assume that the methods thought useful for a backward child should be equally so for a younger normal child with higher IQ but the same mental age. Naturally this equation has never been stated explicitly, people have steered well clear of such a gross confusion. But once an idea has been accepted (in this case the unclear notion of *development*) it takes on a life of its own and, in certain cases at least,² acquires prominence through a sort of osmosis.

Besides these particular issues, which are of interest only to specialists, Itard intriguingly but unintentionally suggests to us other, more general questions on the very nature of the education of children, or rather on what used to be called their *schooling*. It is quite clear that what children have to learn (for a start, their native language, the structure of the family and many other essentials, some of them so surprising that they embarrassed even Freud and caused him to hypothesize a sort of collective memory), does not and cannot reach them exclusively through institutional education, what Itard aptly enough calls 'the ordinary system of social education'. In the attempt to re-educate his savage he discovered the system's inadequacy; basically, however, he was determined to perfect and complete it in order to evolve not only a more efficient pedagogy, but what might be called a *total* pedagogy, able to supply that 'most feeble and least intelligent of animals', natural man, with the 'as yet not calculated' (as he puts it) sum total of culture. It is hardly worth noting that such utopianism could only lead to failure, for when all is said and done the failure was perhaps inevitable. Today we are in no danger of falling into this kind of theoretical error, but it cannot be said that we have done much to clarify the problem.

What is our model for the schooling of children? Should we listen to the ethnologists, who show us how society mystifies its children and confronts them with apparently arbitrary conditions and requirements before admitting them to full membership; or should we follow other researchers (Erikson for example), who observe primitive societies, and see children as natural absolutes who must adapt themselves to the relativism of society under the threat of neurosis? The two viewpoints cannot be combined. One of them, if pursued far enough, would explain the rôle played by children in a synchrony, and might even help us to understand Itard's satisfaction at being entrusted with the savage, the effort he devotes to him, his pedantry. The other, diachronic, approach would show us how we pass from childhood to what is called the adult state, and how the savage failed to achieve this.³

It goes without saying that the questions which occur to us when we

¹ Jean Itard, *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*, in *Wolf Children* by Lucien Malson, NLB £2.50.

² In Montessori and Decroly for example.

³ Although Freud started with an attitude which would support Erikson's in practice, his ideas tend to agree with those of the ethnologists.

read Itard today are not the ones that he asked himself. Inclined to an empiricist posture, by virtue of his medical training and philosophical convictions, he hoped to derive results under two headings from his experiment. As the savage represented the 'natural state' he would have to be taught, not *everything*, but precisely those things *not supplied by nature*. Thus the old daydream of Psammeticos⁴, to know the true nature of man, would be realized: deduct what Itard had to teach the savage from a fully socialized man, and the result would be human nature. Secondly, the experiment was to prove the correctness of certain hypotheses (essentially Condillac's). A third result, the evolution of new pedagogic methods, was totally unlooked-for at the beginning: methods simply had to be tailored to the experiment. These methods can be seen to be influenced by the hypotheses being verified, but the relationship is hardly mentioned and it is exceptional for Itard to make a critical reassessment of his methods even after a setback.

A Specialist in Deaf-mutes

The Consulate authorities entrusted the 'savage' to Itard because he was a specialist and innovator in the field of educating deaf-mutes. He was known as the inventor of 'demutization', having sought and found means of introducing people deaf from birth to language and words; so the savage was handed over to him like a deaf-mute. Itard's failure with the savage was most complete in the very area of verbal education—once again, perhaps there could have been no other outcome. In any case Itard was perfectly well aware that the problem was quite different from that raised by a deaf-mute. There is a radical difference between a subject who has lived all his life in a universe organized around the structures of language, even if he has never heard a word, and one who does not speak because he has always lived in the depths of wordless nature; one could say, because he has lived in solitude and not only in silence. The problem quickly became complicated for Itard. Sometimes he reasoned as if the difficulties sprang from his pupil's having passed the age at which people normally learn to speak, as if he would have to hypothesize a degeneration of the aptitudes (which would conflict to some extent with the development theory); sometimes he reasoned as if life in the woods had caused a lesion of the intellectual faculties, producing what would be called nowadays a 'psychogenic muteness'. Citizen Pinel, who had met the savage, found him in every respect similar to the idiots in the asylums. Despite Pinel's great authority, Itard maintained that the boy (whom he called Victor) was normal. It seems that the question was clear to both Pinel and Itard, even if the answer was subject to argument: whether or not the boy could be said to be normal, he was an example of pure nature.

To us, the question is more confused: the savage was not in a normal condition, he was on the contrary in a pitiable state, but we also think that no child, whatever his native abilities, would have survived the

⁴ Psammeticos' purpose was to establish the comparative ages of different nations, but his method was to reconstitute natural man. (Herodotus, II, 2).

same experience any better. We may even be tempted to think that Victor's ability to adapt to forest life suggests exceptional personal qualities. So Itard inaugurated this marriage of pedagogy and medicine with a confusion (the savage is normal so far as nature is concerned, all he needs is for culture to be added; but his way of life has damaged his development, he needs medical attention); a confusion fated to persist for some considerable time, for inevitably a concrete example like Victor exposed the arbitrary character of socially ordered distinctions so thoroughly that in the end Itard had to go beyond what he called the ordinary system of social education and outside the limits of the existing medical system. In this way there arose a whole category of (medico-pedagogic) questions which remain unanswered to this day. Itard's background as an educator of deaf-mutes seemed to guarantee his competence on two levels. He borrowed from medicine his penchant for observation, his trial-and-error method, what one might call his empirical-phenomenological approach. He had no need to apply any medical treatment in the technical sense, as the savage possessed an iron constitution; all Itard managed to do was to give him a genuine cold by weakening him with repeated hot baths, an accomplishment of which he was extremely proud but which can hardly be called a therapeutic breakthrough. It is difficult for us to take Itard's reason for doing this (that civilized men suffer from maladies and to escape them completely would be abnormal) as seriously as he did. Indeed if one goes into a little detail, examining Itard's theory of the rôle of the sense organs, and of sensibility in general, in the context of the re-education job facing him, one can say without hesitation not only that his medical ideas were of very little help to him, but they actively complicated and obstructed his work.

Pedagogue and Philosopher

If Itard's performance as Victor's doctor seems unimpressive to us, it is worth noting that he was hardly fanatical about the rôle himself. He saw himself primarily as a pedagogue, and as a philosopher. As he placed all his hopes on this part of himself, so it was Itard the teacher who reacted to the inevitable disappointments with pain, and eventually with anger. The readers of Voltaire, of Montesquieu or of Paul and Virginie or Robinson Crusoe, rushed to the city limits to witness the savage's arrival in Paris, to hear the cries of admiration that his first sight of the capital's wonders must surely wring from him, to listen as he whispered the secrets of his forest life . . . Itard had never had such illusions. Nor had he been carried away by Rousseau's pedagogic novel. He believed that he had had the good fortune to be entrusted with something that might approximate on closer examination to Condillac's statue. But the pedagogue outweighed the philosopher in him, and instead of using his experiment to put Condillac's theory to the test, he simply applied it with blind faith, thus revealing a hitherto unnoticed aspect of it: that it is constructed like a pedagogic model, the statue linking with the traditional image of the ideal pupil, the perfect, ignorant being that the Ancients tried to achieve with doses of hellebore. How else can we explain his indifference to all that his pupil had not learned from him? After all, Victor 'knew' a good deal. He would turn his head sharply when a nut was cracked nearby: his hear-

ing, according to Itard, was not developed. He could tell instantly whether a dead bird was edible by sniffing it: his sense of smell was uncultivated. Now that 'survival exercises' are common place we can easily imagine a situation which would have appeared insane to Itard: reverse the roles and send Itard into the woods at La Caune with the savage, to see what he would learn there that would be really new to him. Even without this preposterous fantasy it is clear that Itard learned nothing from the savage, that he made him into a blank screen on which he projected his own knowledge. If we learn something from reading him, it is not really about the savage, nor about Itard, but about what is revealing and exciting in their encounter.

As in Ionesco's *Lesson*, the ideal pupil is also the major obstacle, initial pleasure is transformed into painful duty, interest gives way to a sense of mission. Those who had gone seeking the savage in his woods had contracted a debt to him, however awkward it might be to pay it off; not that the pupil escaped all blame for this problem. Struggling with what now seems one of his more ill-conceived pedagogic initiatives, Itard became convinced that his pupil's pathetic confusion resulted from ill-will, and complacently recorded his own dramatic exclamations for posterity: "Unhappy creature" I said with a sad heart as though he could hear me, "since my labours are wasted and your efforts fruitless, go back to your forests and the wild life of yore; or if your new needs now leave you dependent on a society which you cannot serve, then go and die of poverty and boredom at Bicêtre". Behind this entirely predictable effect of the *furor docendi* driving Itard one can easily imagine the feelings of jealousy sometimes discerned in adoptive mothers: Go back to your real mother (Nature)! Falling that, to the poorhouse? There is not the slightest doubt that the doctor saw himself as an adoptive mother; he wrote it with his own hand.

Natural man; savage; ignorant child; pupil newly purged with hellebore; what can they represent in their extreme destitution but the *subject* separated from *knowledge* that lies deep within each of us, the internal *ignomus* against which the autodidact and the pedant wage arduous struggle in their different ways?

Civilization Weeps

Itard was supported by two convictions current in his time. One was that the pedagogue's impatience, even acts of violence (which he did not neglect to use) are in the final analysis beneficial. He succeeded in making the savage weep: a good sign. As for the other, he believed sincerely that since the old prejudices had been cast aside there could be no really insoluble problem (an idea which was later set to music by Béranger and systematized by Auguste Comte). From this conviction he derived an immense faith in the ultimate success of his enterprise, which is no mean merit. But it is also the reason why he criticized himself so little.

Many of Itard's 'medical' ideas, and his means of applying them, were evidently without the slightest value, but as they seldom resulted in obvious failure he always found reasons for congratulating himself.

Let us say that he derived considerable satisfaction from them, and that if they did Victor no good, neither did they harm him greatly. For example, he gave him boiling hot baths on the grounds that the inhabitants of hot countries are more sensitive than those who live in cold countries. He combined this treatment with douches over the head: the seat of the intellect and so on. The savage made some progress towards socialization during this period—certainly not as a result of these measures. Another more conventional system of teaching was probably at work from another direction, doubtless the contribution of Mme Guérin, who had been given to the savage as governess. It is difficult to avoid the impression that Mme Guérin was taking a hand in the game, possibly with as much luck as Itard. We are a good deal less well-informed on this side of things, since Itard discriminates sharply between the hours dedicated to re-education and those approximating to break or playtime. He sometimes took part in these amusements, and it seems that things happened during them which we would find interesting; but these were 'childish things' which the savage enjoyed with him or with Mme Guérin. Itard softens when he mentions these innocent games: it is here that he compares his satisfactions with those a mother might feel. But he did not expect to learn anything from them, they were his amusements too, his childish things too, at a time when he was devoting his real self to the hard labour, the crushing and, to put it plainly, impossible task of re-education. Once recreation was set aside, Itard entered a serious world where every pleasure was a reward and every pain a punishment; either that or they were without meaning altogether. The wish must be made to fit the need. Once, while driving in the woods near Paris, Victor showed such a strong desire to get out and run about that Itard suppressed all further drives to spare him 'similar trials'. The trial was evidently Itard's, just as Victor's infantilisms were confused with his own. After all, these attitudes were common enough among educators at that time. But it is also true that Itard's whims and severities produced no particular effect.

It was when the time came to start on language and words that the real inadequacy of the prevailing ideas became apparent. It is clear that what Itard most needed was not a greater medical competence, but rather a more correct theory of language than the one available to him. We do not know whether Victor would have been able to grasp language; we do not know because we can see clearly that Itard's re-education was not a good method of leading him to it.

Itard's Idea of Language

In Itard's biological and utilitarian world, language was seen as a means of communication used primarily to convey needs. To do this one employs words which are the signs for things or (Itard did not worry about the distinction) for the ideas of things. Learning on these principles, Itard devised a system of language drill: Victor would be deprived of milk until he expressed his need by saying 'milk'. It was an extension of what our author calls 'pedagogic frustration'.

Itard did not evolve this idea specifically to teach language. He had used

it right from the start: for example, he had deprived his savage of muscular activity and food to aid the development of functions he considered badly developed, such as sensibility. He derived the idea not only from the old medicine based on 'humours' but also, perhaps mainly, from a whole pedagogic tradition which is also the tradition of animal trainers. I'll make you do what I want, because I am master of your need. When analysts, in the past at least, twisted the meaning of Freud's words ('An analysis should proceed in a situation of abstinence') to make frustration into one of the instruments of the cure, close examination might well have shown that they were slipping back into this tradition. In any case, Itard's 'pedagogic frustration' was aimed crudely and directly at real, elementary needs.

Now the savage had shown that he knew quite well how to communicate his needs, not only without words, but without any language at all in the true sense of the word: Itard, a very good observer, noticed that he did not use a language of gestures but 'a language of action', that is to say precisely something which, unlike gesture, is *not a language*. Thus the savage had no trouble making Itard understand his desire for the milk of which he had been deprived; he did it so thoroughly that Itard finished by giving in to him. Itard did not draw from this the conclusion that since communication could be established without language, his pedagogy was wrongly oriented. But Victor took the lesson further: when Itard gave in for the sake of peace and quiet and handed over the coveted milk without first getting his word, Victor, instead of reacting as he should have done, pronounced the word 'lait' and repeated it in a playful manner. Itard was very distressed: 'The word pronounced, instead of being the sign of a want . . . appeared . . . to be merely an exclamation of joy. If this word had been uttered before the thing that he desired had been granted, my object would have been nearly accomplished: then the true use of speech would have been soon acquired by Victor; a point of communication would have been established between him and me . . . Instead of this, I had obtained only an expression of the pleasure which he felt, insignificant as it related to himself and useless to us both.' He noted that Victor sometimes pronounced the word before receiving his milk, but commented that this was always 'without having any view in the use of it'. After this cruel deception Itard gave up his plan for education in the spoken word (the 'fourth section') and considered it a humiliating failure. He knew quite well, however, the way in which very young children begin to babble words; he mentions this in the same passage, but makes no connection. His loyalty to theoretical concepts had made him incapable of seeing what was happening before his eyes, but he was perfectly well informed of factors he did not want to take into consideration. Victor appeared to him to have made 'defective use' of the first word he had pronounced. But he writes: 'It will be the same thing, neither more nor less, than what happens to the child who at first lisps the word papa, without attaching to it any idea, goes on saying it, in all places, and on all occasions etc.' A pertinent remark, but one which served only to console the pedagogue. 'It could be', he seems to be saying, 'that nature will make up for my impotent art?'—but that is not what he wanted. One is tempted to parody him and say: if Itard had been able to listen to Victor, without preconceived ideas, his

object would have been nearly accomplished; he himself would have acquired the true nature of speech. Or at least he would have been able to doubt that he already knew it. At the time, Itard was the one man in the world who knew most about verbal re-education (among the deaf, admittedly). Seen in this light, his encounter with the savage's muteness acquires an aspect of pathos, the pedagogic drama reaches a rousing climax. He did not throw in his hand after this first setback; the re-education continued by other means, just as inadequate, but not without significance.

Drill in Writing

Giving up the drill in the spoken word, he devised another drill based on the written language. If he needs an excuse for this risky decision, it can be found in his work with deaf-mutes. He designed and had made a game consisting of movable letters (later perfected by Maria Montessori) and set out to establish associations between words formed with the letters and the objects for which they thus became the signs. His preconceptions prevented him from noticing that a method of this sort has no effect whatsoever in leading towards the acquisition of language: the words shown to Victor naturally became objects corresponding to other objects; the fact that they were constructed from movable letters and thus in a sense 'articulated' means no more, in reality, than that they were composite objects, able to be dismantled.

It was possible to train Victor to bring a certain object by showing him another certain object. Any trainer can do that; it is even possible to ask for an object taken at random from among a class of objects, provided the class is composed of objects sufficiently indistinguishable from one another. This probably happened every day with Mme Guérin. This apprenticeship has nothing to do with the acquisition of language. What happened in the end was that Itard brought into play objects which are only interchangeable through the medium of language. Presenting the word *book*, he was astonished to discover that to Victor this word meant a certain particular book, always the same one, and not the class of books. It is certain that Victor, without knowing anything about what a book might contain, had been observant enough to notice something that escaped Itard: that when someone looks for a book, it is never just *any* book. It would certainly not have occurred to Mme Guérin, who did not care about pedagogy, to send Victor to find a book, any book, because it would have had no meaning either for her or for him. Doubtless she could have sent him to fetch a spoon, for that would not have posed any problem. Without suspecting it Itard had fabricated a difficulty which was not as unpredictable as he believed.

The account of this difficulty, which cost the pupil so many tears and on which the master expended so much rage and despair, is full of interest for us. The master believed that he could proceed straightforwardly, like the botanist who labels a plant with the name of the species, operating within a pre-established language, as if he were one step ahead of Aristotle, who was able to establish logical classes on the basis of language (but who certainly could not have established language on the basis of logic). His pupil's muteness forced him to establish classi-

fication *before* language, making empirical use of the resemblance of objects for one another, and to live through as a real drama what had been only, until then, the error hidden in the theory of abstraction. Yet instead of learning what language is by these means, Victor learned that it is possible to replace an object with something similar. One day, without there being any question of words or 'reading' but simply because he had no plate at his disposal, he placed a small, round glass-covered picture (probably with a white frame) on the table. The fact that he chose this way of going about obtaining a spoonful of lentils seems to show, beyond his responsiveness to training, a sort of inventive ingenuity. But it is difficult to see it as a step closer to the acquisition of language. Itard's explanation is that Victor drew an incorrect conclusion as to identity of function from a superficial resemblance; this, when he, Itard, had with great difficulty taught the boy, when presented with a certain object, to fetch another one in accordance with laws of equivalence which must generally escape those who cannot speak. Itard's observation remains too limited, and the question is certainly not that simple. We know that Victor, in that part of his universe ruled by Mme Guérin, was responsible for laying the table for every meal. It seems likely that to perform this task he must have been able to see a plate as equivalent to any other of the same type, and that he had not had to be taught this kind of 'generalization'. A philosophy would have to have burdened itself with various preconceptions to be able to pose itself such an unreal problem. It was when Itard introduced a significant relationship between the object-words and the objects *asked for* that Victor ran into difficulties. Itard saw clearly that the incident of the picture used as a plate was a side-effect of his pedagogy. But he remained faithful to his idea of education based on apprenticeship, wrote off the picture incident against the trial and error method (as an error to be corrected, therefore useful), and forged ahead imperturbably, deriving a modest satisfaction from these first results. One might well ask: Is this not something like the way in which normal children are taught to speak? It certainly is; perhaps they pick up the essentials *in spite of* education.⁵ Be that as it may, Itard was counting on the work with movable letters to prepare his pupil for a renewed apprenticeship in the spoken word. All his efforts were in vain. He tells us little about this stage of his failure, reporting only the essential point: Victor did not utter a single word; Itard was up against 'the recalcitrance of this organ' (the voice), and had nothing left but the consolation of pronouncing his pupil, or patient, incurably dumb.

Between the acts of this useless drama, however, some very interesting things happened. The incurably mute savage was heard quite often to utter a syllable resembling the Italian word *gli*. Itard recognized it as the name of a young relative of Mme Guérin's, Julie. This feature is interesting: clipped syllables of this sort, representing names, have been observed in obsessional fantasies going back to infancy.⁶ Itard observed the phenomenon and understood it perfectly. The reasons why he did not know what to do with it are obscure and complex.

⁵ Itard knew this: he had read the story of the girl of Sogny (reported by Louis Racine in 1747) without objecting to anything in it.

⁶ A connection made by Serge Leclaire.

'Childish' Amusement

Perhaps the most important of them is that the *savage* made this advance during his amusement hours; it could hardly be brought into the pedagogic system, it was one of the 'childish things' involving Mme Guérin, in which Itard only took part in order to refresh himself for his arduous enterprise. Even more surprisingly, the doctor thought that this use of a name would have had a meaning if Victor had reached puberty; before this event it meant nothing (doubtless because the nature of words is to express needs!). As if Itard had no idea that children use first names before reaching puberty; as if mothers did not gaze with benevolent amusement on the first love affairs of their small children. Our pedagogue was after all a hardened bachelor and we know nothing of his unconscious difficulties.

But also, if he attached so little importance to something he should have found striking—the utterance of a first name by a mute—it was because anxieties about which we know nothing specific, concerning his pupil's approaching puberty, were beginning to prevail over his verbal preoccupations. The moment soon came for him to observe the effects of Victor's puberty, of which he tells us that he expected great things. Though quite reticent about the outward signs of this puberty, this excellent observer paints a most touching picture of the confusion into which it threw Victor. But he is pretty embarrassed himself. He notes that the first symptoms of puberty 'cast considerable suspicion on the origin of certain affections of the heart which we regard as very *natural*'. In other words, natural man turned out to be an even more ill-equipped animal than he had imagined. The inevitable consequence in his system was that sexuality must be brought into the pedagogic system. This was a brand-new error, a true discovery of the period which has survived through the subsequent confusion—for attempts at sexual pedagogy must not be confused with Freud's advice to Dr Fürst, easy though the mistake is. Freud's concepts are only meaningful in relation to the mystifications, taboos and morality imposed by parents, and, of course, they presuppose language: there is no question of making up for 'natural' ignorance with instruction on adapting to reality. The 'clarifications' recommended by Freud do not have the character of communications of knowledge; they lift an interdict on knowledge. One can see how the pedagogic tradition has tried, since Freud's transformation of the question, to regain by stealth and from various angles the territory freed by psychoanalysis. In Itard's day, more simply, it was a novelty to discover that puberty was far from being the emergence of a *naturally adapted* sexual instinct. Had this been the case the instinct should have manifested itself with unusual strength (a 'savage' strength) in Victor's case. Despite his observations, however, Itard continued to believe in a natural instinct ready to unleash itself. He could see that nothing of the sort existed, *but all the same* he feared the disturbances that might have ensued had anyone 'dared to reveal the secret of his anxieties and the reason for his desires to this young man'. Confronted with such a danger, the innovator retreated into the medical orthodoxy of his time and restored calm by bleeding.

Lacking both language and its effects, Victor could not have assimilated

lated what happened to him in a way which we would understand. For example, *be himself* would not have connected the bleeding with a castration. Its significance to Itard is another matter, but we have too little information to try to analyse Itard's involvement in Victor's sexual difficulties. The involvement is apparent, but only in outline; it lies at the source of what he allows to be seen of his wishes and fears concerning the extension of his pedagogue's rôle to this initiation. 'I have awaited this moment (Victor's puberty) with great keenness', he writes, 'envisaging it as a source of new sensations for my pupil and of fascinating observations for myself, watching out carefully for all the preliminary phenomena of this moral crisis; every day, I waited . . .' etc. He was re-living his adolescent dreams, the curiosity of his infancy. But no matter⁷. The questions we can set for ourselves on this encounter between ignorance and one who believed himself to possess knowledge are, after all, of greater interest either than Itard's personal problems or than the loose pronouncements on the nature of man (fascinating though this may still be) with which the observation of Victor is supposed to have provided us.

Itard began his first report by recalling the ignorance of previous centuries. Wild children had been studied by others before him. 'But', he writes, 'such was at these times the tardy progress of science, the students of which were devoted to theory and uncertain hypothesis, and to the exclusive labour of the closet, that actual observation was reckoned of no value; and these interesting facts tended little towards improving the natural history of man'. Moral philosophy was 'scarcely in its infancy' and medicine had 'views necessarily contracted by a doctrine altogether mechanical' unable to achieve 'philosophical reflections with regard to the maladies of the understanding'. But these two sciences 'have in our days got rid of their old errors, and made an immense progress. . .'. They could therefore make it possible to organize the physical and moral development of a subject like Victor, or failing that carefully to collect 'the history of a being so astonishing'.

These words invite us not to pride ourselves (as he would have done in our place) on the advances we have been able to make since Itard's time; for although these advances are in a sense the measure of his inadequacies, they can tell us nothing about our own, and there is absolutely no guarantee that we would be able to obtain better results than he did. He reached one of his goals: the way in which he 'gathered with care the story of so astonishing a being' made his study a unique document. Doubtless it is a long way from satisfying us, but this is because our theoretical posture, which hardly permits us to formulate better answers than those obtained by him, enables us on the other hand to ask any number of questions which he would never have thought of. It was, however, the theory at his disposal—unacceptable though it is in our eyes—which made possible the existence of a study which is very valuable in many ways, and it deserves different treatment from the blind adherence or unjust contempt usually granted to it.

⁷ Obviously, there is nothing astonishing in the unconscious connection between pedagogic worries and the curiosity of early childhood where sexual matters are concerned.

Certainly, all theoretical questions apart, Mme Guérin can seem a good deal more sensible than him. In any case she was less obnoxious. But no usable observation could have been expected from her. In a dialectical movement which is analogous, but only analogous, to that of the advance of science in its beginnings, it is observing the *savage* that reveals (but not to Itard) what is false in his theoretical attitudes, while it is only because he possessed an inflexible theoretical attitude that he was able to observe so well and write such a good account.

A Mission rather than Research

Certainly there was none of the true scientist in the doctor-pedagogue's make-up, or he would have noticed the facts questioning his knowledge at every stage. Feeling, as he did, that he had been entrusted with a mission rather than simply handed an interesting piece of research, and finding the hopes which he believed so soundly based dashed by what he called, characteristically, 'unforeseen obstacles', he could only bewail an unjust fate. This missionary attitude was not without value: he derived from it both his brave confidence and his certainty that Victor, incurable or not, presented a task to be attempted. This could well be the reason why his study, which still remains the clearest record of a failed re-education, still serves to encourage those confronting similar tasks. Thus, despite its technical failure, his work survives.

But if we can still take an interest in this ancient drama instead of relegating it to the status of an historical curiosity, it is not only because of the humanitarian passion of its protagonist but because the drama itself, in updated versions, is still being played. This introduces a delicate problem which has, perhaps, received less attention than it deserves: if the theories Itard used are no longer of much value, how does it come about that they still serve—in a more or less dissimulated fashion, but real for all that—as a basis for many re-educative or straightforwardly pedagogic practices? It is, for example, a simple but mysterious fact that schoolchildren learn to count with the help of contrivances which adhere in every respect to the concepts of number evolved by the empiricists, and which are therefore totally inconsistent with our own concept. More generally, one can see any teacher dispensing the knowledge of today by means of a pedagogy founded in the knowledge of the day before yesterday. The usual justifications for this (e.g. that these concepts are suitable for children because of the undeveloped state of their faculties) seem to me insubstantial.

The Role of the Children

It seems rather that we should carry the question further and reflect on the millennial persistence of myths relating to education. They mask from us a fact which is clear enough for all that: that the child is given a certain function in the world of adults, in the same way that Victor became Itard's elective object. Ethnology is beginning to uncover for us the rôle of children in a social organization which is largely centred on their existence, and in which they are, by virtue of their cultivated credulity, the indispensable support of mythical truths. At the same time,

psychoanalysis of children is discovering the rôle they play in parental fantasies. Obviously we do not know much about Victor's place in Itard's fantasies, but we do know that the whole question was beyond the latter's reach; for him, children were pure emanations of nature which must be invested with culture, in much the same way as they had to be put into the clothes which seemed to symbolize culture. The fact that Victor's case was difficult, perhaps impossible, was finally lost in one of the most ancient traditions of all: the pedagogue has always tended to consider that his task is a barely supportable burden, that he half-kills himself to instil his knowledge in others, that he has every reason to chafe at his disappointments. As with two trains in a station, so one myth can conceal another.

Those philosophies, some of which were still new in Itard's time, which accept the child as being the natural and virgin support of an experience and a knowledge which he must absorb directly and wholesale, connect with one aspect of the educational myths. Thus these philosophies survive, not among philosophers, but where support for these myths is needed.

We see clearly that the millennial myths can persist in 'the ordinary system of social education' without wreaking obvious havoc; their apparent harmlessness is what allows them to persist. This is certainly not the situation in cases where re-education is indicated, or with the technical problems which arise from it. Itard saw this perfectly, and said so. But he still subscribed to a philosophy which could only accentuate the dominance of myths over his thought. He believed that the historical moment, combined with the opportunity confronting him, was going to enable him to achieve the pedagogic masterpiece, the mythical ideal; he was being asked to school pure nature. He had two sorts of knowledge at his disposal: the banal, which he shared with Mme Guérin and could communicate, and the other, more precious, which qualified him for the task. He could not see that Victor was the support of this strictly imaginary wisdom. He was a counter in a game of which he thought himself master. Despite his remarkable inventive and innovatory talents he assumed the appearance of a pedant, a hero in the service of a myth, condemned in advance to run aground on 'unforeseen obstacles'. Nor was he capable of asking himself whether the successes on which he might have congratulated himself might not have been seen as evidence for the soundness of his ideas; for he never doubted that his ideas were sound.

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Art as Form of Reality

The thesis of the end of art has become a familiar slogan: radicals take it as a truism; they reject or 'suspend' art as part of bourgeois culture, just as they reject or suspend its literature or philosophy. This verdict extends easily to all theory, all intelligence (no matter how 'creative') that does not spark action and practice, that does not noticeably help to change the world, that does not—be it only for a short time—break through the universe of mental and physical pollution in which we live. Music does it, with song and dance: the music which activates the body; the songs which no longer sing but cry and shout. To measure the road travelled in the last thirty years, compare the 'traditional', classical tone and text of the songs of the Spanish Civil War with today's songs of protest and defiance. Or compare the 'classical' theatre of Brecht with the Living Theatre of today. We witness not only the political but also, and primarily, the artistic attack on art in all its forms, on art as Form itself. The distance and dissociation of art from reality are denied, refused, and destroyed; if art is still anything at all, it must be real, part and parcel of life—but of a life which is itself the conscious

negation of the established way of life, with all its institutions, with its entire material and intellectual culture, its entire immoral morality, its required and its clandestine behaviour, its work and its fun.

A double reality has emerged (or re-emerged), that of those who say 'no', and that of those who say 'yes'. Those engaged in whatever artistic effort is still 'valid', refuse to say 'yes' to both reality *and* to art. Yet the refusal itself *is* also reality—very real are the young who have no more patience, who have, with their own bodies and minds, experienced the horrors and the oppressive comforts of the given reality; real are the ghettos and their spokesmen; real are the forces of liberation all over the globe, East and West; First, Second, and Third World's. But the meaning of this reality to those who experience it can no longer be communicated in the established language and images—in the available forms of expression, no matter how new, how radical they may be.

The Domain of Forms

What is at stake is the vision, the experience of a reality that is to fundamentally different, so antagonistic to the prevailing reality that any communication through the established means seems to reduce this difference, to vitiate this experience. This irreconcilability with the very medium of communication also extends to the forms of art themselves, to *Art as Form*.¹ From the position of today's rebellion and refusal, Art itself appears as part and force of the tradition which perpetuates that which *is*, and prevents the realization of that which can and ought to be. Art does so precisely inasmuch as it *is* Form, because the artistic Form (no matter how *anti-art* it strives to be) arrests that which is in motion, gives it limit and frame and place in the prevailing universe of experience and aspirations, gives it a value *in* this universe, makes it an object among others. This means that, in this universe, the work of art, as well as of anti-art, becomes *exchange* value, commodity: and it is precisely the *Commodity Form*, as the form of reality, which is the target of today's rebellion.

True, the commercialization of Art is not new, and not even of very recent date. It is as old as bourgeois society. The process gains momentum with the almost unlimited reproducibility of the work of art, by virtue of which the *oeuvre* becomes susceptible to imitation and repetition even in its finest and most sublime achievements. In his masterful analysis of this process, Walter Benjamin has shown that there is one thing which militates against all reproduction, namely, the 'aura' of the *oeuvre*, the unique historical situation in which the work of art is created, into which it speaks, and which defines its function and meaning. As soon as the *oeuvre* leaves its own historical moment, which is unrepeatable and unredeemable, its 'original' truth is falsified, or (more cautiously) modified: it acquires a different meaning, responding (affirmatively or negatively) to the different historical situation. Owing

¹ I shall use the term *Art* (capitalized) as including not only the visual arts but also literature and music. I shall use the term *Form* (capitalized) to that which defines Art as Art, that is to say, as essentially (ontologically) different not only from (everyday) reality but also from such other manifestations of intellectual culture as science and philosophy.

to new instruments and techniques, to new forms of perception and thought, the original oeuvre may now be interpreted, instrumented, 'translated', and thus become richer, more complex, refined, fuller of meaning. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is no longer what it *was* to the artist and his audience and public.

Yet, through all these changes, something remains identically the same: the *oeuvre* itself, to which all these modifications happen. The most 'updated' work of art is still the particular, unique work of art updated. What kind of entity is it which remains the identical 'substance' of all its modifications?

It is not the 'plot': Sophocles' tragedy shares the 'story' of Oedipus with many other literary expressions; it is not the 'object' of a painting, which recurs innumerable times (as general category: portrait of a man sitting, standing; mountainous landscape, etc); it is not the stuff, the raw material of which the work is made. What constitutes the unique and enduring identity of an oeuvre, and what makes a *work* into a work of *art*—this entity is the Form. By virtue of the Form, and the Form alone, the content achieves that uniqueness which makes it the content of one particular work of art and of no other. The way in which the story is told; the structure and selectiveness of verse and prose; that which is *not* said, *not* represented and yet present; the interrelations of lines and colours and points—these are some aspects of the Form which removes, dissociates, alienates the oeuvre from the given reality and makes it enter into its own reality: the realm of forms.

The realm of forms: it is an *historical* reality, an irreversible sequence of styles, subjects, techniques, rules—each inseparably related to its society, and repeatable only as imitation. However, in all their almost infinite diversity, they are but variations of the *one Form* which distinguishes Art from any other product of human activity. Ever since Art left the magical stage, ever since it ceased to be 'practical', to be one 'technique' among others—that is to say, ever since it became a separate branch of the social division of labour, it assumed a Form of its own, common to all arts.

This Form corresponded to the new function of Art in society: to provide the 'holiday', the elevation, the break in the terrible routine of life—to present something 'higher', 'deeper', perhaps 'truer' and better, satisfying needs not satisfied in daily work and fun, and therefore pleasurable. (I am speaking of the social, the 'objective' historical function of Art; I am not speaking of what Art is to the artist, not of his intentions and goals, which are of a very different order.) In other, more brutal words: Art is not (or not supposed to be) a use value to be consumed in the course of the daily performances of men; its utility is of a transcendent kind, utility for the soul or the mind which does not enter the normal behaviour of men and does not really change it—except for precisely that short period of elevation, the cultured holiday: in church, in the museum, the concert hall, the theatre, before the monuments and ruins of the great past. After the break, real life continues: business as usual.

Classical Aesthetics

With these features, Art becomes a force *in* the (given) society, but not *of* the (given) society. Produced in and for the established reality, providing it with the beautiful and the sublime, elevation and pleasure, Art also dissociates itself from this reality and confronts it with another one: the beautiful and the sublime, the pleasure and the truth that Art presents are not merely those obtaining in the actual society. No matter how much Art may be determined, shaped, directed by prevailing values, standards of taste and behaviour, limits of experience, it is always more and other than beautification and sublimation, recreation and validation of that which is. Even the most realistic oeuvre constructs a reality of its own: its men and women, its objects, its landscape, its music reveal what remains unsaid, unseen, unheard in everyday life. Art is 'alienating'.

As part of the *established* culture, Art is *affirmative*, sustaining this culture; as *alienation* from the established reality, Art is a *negating* force. The *history of Art* can be understood as the *harmonization of this antagonism*.

The material, stuff, and data of Art (words, sounds, lines and colours; but also thoughts emotions, images) are ordered, interrelated, defined and 'contained' in the *oeuvre* in such a manner that they constitute a structured whole—closed, in its external appearance, between the two covers of a book, in a frame, at a specific place; its presentation takes a specific time, before and after which is the *other* reality, daily life. In its effect on the recipient, the *oeuvre* itself may endure and recur; but it will remain, as recurrent, a self-contained whole, a mental or sensuous object clearly separated and distinct from (real) things. The laws or rules governing the organization of the elements in the *oeuvre* as a unified whole seem of infinite variety, but the classical aesthetic tradition has given them a common denominator: they are supposed to be guided by the idea of the *beautiful*.

This central idea of classical aesthetics invokes the sensibility as well as the rationality of man, Pleasure Principle and Reality Principle: the work of art is to appeal to the senses, to satisfy sensuous needs—but in a highly sublimated manner. Art is to have a reconciling, tranquillizing, *and* a cognitive function, to be beautiful *and* true. The beautiful was to lead to the truth: *in* the beautiful, a truth was supposed to appear that did not, and could not appear in any other form.

Harmonization of the beautiful and the true—what was supposed to make up the essential unity of the work of art has turned out to be an increasingly impossible *unification of opposites*, for the true has appeared as increasingly incompatible with the beautiful. Life, the human condition has militated increasingly against the sublimation of reality in the Form of Art.

This sublimation is not primarily (and perhaps not at all!) a process in the psyche of the artist but rather an ontological condition, pertaining to the *Form* of Art itself. It necessitates an organization of the material

into the unity and enduring stability of the *oeuvre*, and this organization 'succumbs' as it were to the idea of the Beautiful. It is as if this idea would impose itself upon the material through the creative energy of the artist (though by no means as his conscious intention). The result is most evident in those works which are the uncompromisingly 'direct' accusation of reality. The artist indicts—but the indictment anaesthetizes the terror. Thus, the brutality, stupidity, horror of war are all there in the work of Goya, but as 'pictures', they are caught up in the dynamic of aesthetic transfiguration—they can be admired, side by side with the glorious portraits of the king who presided over the horror. The Form contradicts the content, and triumphs over the content: at the price of its anaesthetization. The immediate, unsublimated (physiological and psychological) response: vomiting, cry, fury, gives way to the aesthetic experience: the germane response to the work of art.

The character of this aesthetic sublimation, essential to Art and inseparable from its history as part of affirmative culture, has found its perhaps most striking formulation in Kant's concept of *interesseloses Wohlgefallen*: delight, pleasure divorced from all interest, desire, inclination. The aesthetic object is, as it were, without a particular Subject, or rather without any relation to a Subject other than that of pure contemplation—pure eye, pure ear, pure mind. Only in this purification of ordinary experience and its objects, only in this transfiguration of reality emerges the aesthetic universe and the aesthetic object as pleasurable, beautiful and sublime. In other, and more brutal words: the precondition for Art is a radical looking into reality, and a looking away from it—a repression of its immediacy, and of the immediate response to it. It is the *oeuvre* itself which is, and which achieves this repression; and as aesthetic repression, it is 'satisfying', enjoyable. In this sense, Art is in itself a 'happy end'; despair becomes sublime; pain beautiful.

The artistic presentation of the Crucifixion throughout the centuries is still the best example for this aesthetic transfiguration. Nietzsche saw in the Cross 'the most subterranean conspiracy of all times—a conspiracy against sanity, beauty, health, courage, spirit, nobility of the soul, a conspiracy *against life itself*' (*The Antichrist* 62). The Cross as aesthetic object denounces the repressive force in the beauty and spirit of Art: 'a conspiracy against life itself'.

Nietzsche's formula may well serve to elucidate the impetus and the scope of today's rebellion against Art as part and parcel of the affirmative bourgeois culture—a rebellion sparked by the now intolerable, brutal conflict between the potential and the actual, between the very real possibilities of liberation, and the indeed all but conspiratorial efforts, by the powers that be, to prevent this liberation. It seems that the aesthetic sublimation is approaching its historical limits, that the commitment of Art to the Ideal, to the beautiful and the sublime, and with it the 'holiday' function of Art, now offend the human condition. It also seems that the cognitive function of Art can no longer obey the harmonizing 'law of Beauty': the contradiction between form and content shatters the traditional Form of Art.

The Rebellion Against Art

The rebellion against the very Form of Art has a long history. At the height of classical aesthetics, it was an integral part of the Romanticist program; its first desperate outcry was Georg Büchner's indictment that all idealistic art displays a 'disgraceful contempt for humanity'. The protest continues in the renewed efforts to 'save' Art by destroying the familiar, dominating forms of perception, the familiar appearance of the object, the thing because it is part of a false, mutilated experience. The development of Art to non-objective art, minimal art, anti-art was a way towards the liberation of the *Subject*, preparing it for a new object-world instead of accepting and sublimating, beautifying the existing one, freeing mind and body for a new sensibility and sensitivity which can no longer tolerate a mutilated experience and a mutilated sensibility.

The next step is to 'living art' (a *contradictio in adjecto*?), Art in motion, *as* motion. In its own internal development, in its struggle against its own illusions, Art comes to join the struggle against the powers that be, mental and physical, the struggle against domination and repression—in other words, Art, by virtue of its own internal dynamic, is to become a *political force*. It refuses to be for the museum or mausoleum, for the exhibitions of a no longer existing aristocracy, for the holiday of the soul and the elevation of the masses—it wants to be *real*. Today, Art enters the forces of rebellion only as it is *desublimated*: a living Form which gives word and image and sound to the Unnameable, to the lie and its debunking, to the horror and to the liberation from it, to the body and its sensibility as the source and seat of all 'aesthetics', as the seat of the soul and its culture, as the first 'apperception' of the spirits, *Geist*.

Living Art, anti-art in all its variety—is its aim self-defeating? All these frantic efforts to produce the absence of Form, to substitute the real for the aesthetic object, to ridicule oneself and the bourgeois customer—are they not so many activities of frustration, already part of the culture industry and the museum culture? I believe the aim of the 'new act' is self-defeating because it retains, and must retain no matter how minimally, the Form of Art as different from non-art, and it is the Art-Form itself which frustrates the intention to reduce or even annul this difference, to make Art 'real', 'living'.

Art cannot become reality, cannot realise itself without cancelling itself as Art in *all* its forms, even in its most destructive, most minimal, most 'living' forms. The gap which separates Art from reality, the essential otherness of Art, its 'illusory' character can be reduced only to the degree to which *reality itself* tends towards Art as reality's own Form, that is to say, in the course of a revolution, with the emergence of a free society. In this process, the artist would participate—as *artist* rather than as political *activist*, for the tradition of Art cannot be simply left behind or discarded; that which it has achieved, shown, and revealed in authentic forms, contains a truth *beyond* immediate realization or solution, perhaps beyond any realization and solution.

The anti-art of today is condemned to remain Art, no matter how 'anti'

it strives to be. Incapable of bridging the gap between Art and reality, of escaping from the fetters of the Art-Form, the rebellion against 'form' only succeeds in a loss of artistic quality; illusory destruction, illusory overcoming of alienation. The authentic *œuvres*, the true avant-garde of our time, far from obscuring this distance, far from *playing down* alienation, *enlarge* it and harden their incompatibility with the given reality to an extent that defies any (behavioural) application. They fulfill in this way the cognitive function of Art (which is its inherent radical, 'political' function), that is, to name the Unnameable, to confront man with the dreams he betrays and the crimes he forgets. The greater the terrible conflict between that which is and that which can be, the more will the work of art be estranged from the immediacy of real life, thought and behaviour—even political thought and behaviour. I believe that the authentic avant-garde of today are not those who try desperately to produce the absence of Form and the union with real life, but rather those who do not recoil from the exigencies of Form, who find the new word, image, and sound which are capable of 'comprehending' reality as only Art can comprehend—and negate it. This authentic new Form has emerged in the work (already 'classic') of Schönberg, Berg, and Webern; of Kafka and Joyce; of Picasso; it continues today in such achievements as Stockhausen's *Spirale*, and Samuel Beckett's novels. They invalidate the notion of the 'end of art'.

Beyond the Established Division of Labour

In contrast, the 'living art', and especially the 'living theatre' of today does away with the Form of estrangement: in eliminating the distance between the actors, the audience, and the 'outside', it establishes a familiarity and identification with the actors and their message which quickly draws the negation, the rebellion into the daily universe—as an enjoyable and understandable element of this universe. The participation of the audience is spurious and the result of previous arrangements; the change in consciousness and behaviour is itself part of the play—illusion is strengthened rather than destroyed.

There is a phrase of Marx: 'these petrified [social] conditions must be forced to dance by singing to them their own melody.' Dance will bring the dead world to life and make it a human world. But today, 'their own melody' seems no longer communicable except in forms of extreme estrangement and dissociation from all immediacy—in the most conscious and deliberate forms of *Art*.

I believe that 'living art', the 'realization' of Art can only be the event of a qualitatively different society in which a new type of men and women, no longer the subject or object of exploitation, can develop in their life and work the vision of the suppressed *aesthetic* possibilities of men and things—*aesthetic* not as to the specific property of certain objects (the *objet d'art*) but as forms and modes of existence corresponding to the reason and sensibility of free individuals, what Marx called 'the sensuous appropriation of the world'. The realization of Art, the 'new art' is conceivable only as the process of constructing the universe of a free society—in other words: Art as Form of reality.

Art as Form of Reality: it is impossible to ward off the horrible associations provoked by this notion, such as gigantic programmes of beautification, artistic corporation offices, aesthetic factories, industrial parks. These associations belong to the practice of repression. Art as Form of reality means, not the beautification of the given, but the construction of an entirely different and opposed reality. The aesthetic vision is part of the *revolution*; it is a vision of Marx: 'the animal constructs (*formiert*) only according to need; man forms also in accordance with the laws of beauty.'

It is impossible to concretize Art as Form of reality: it would then be creativity, a creation in the material as well as intellectual sense, a juncture of technique and the arts in the total reconstruction of the environment, a juncture of town and country, industry and nature after all have been freed from the horrors of commercial exploitation and beautification, so that Art can no longer serve as a stimulus of business. Evidently, the very possibility of creating such an environment depends on the total transformation of the existing society: a new mode and new goals of production, a new type of human being as producer, the end of role-playing, of the established social division of labour, of work and pleasure.

Would such realization of Art imply the 'invalidation' of the traditional arts? In other words, would it imply the 'atrophy' of the capability to understand and enjoy them, atrophy of the intellectual faculty and the sensuous organs to experience the arts of the past? I suggest a negative answer. Art is transcendent in a sense which distinguishes and divorces it from any 'daily' reality we can possibly envisage. No matter how free, society will be inflicted with necessity—the necessity of labour, of the fight against death and disease, of scarcity. Thus, the arts will retain forms of expression germane to them—and only to them: of a beauty and truth antagonistic to those of reality. There is, even in the most 'impossible' verses of the traditional drama, even in the most impossible opera arias and duets, some element of rebellion which is still 'valid'. There is in them some faithfulness to one's passions, some 'freedom of expression' in defiance of common sense, language, and behaviour which indicts and contradicts the established ways of life. It is by virtue of this 'otherness' that the Beautiful in the traditional arts would retain its truth. And this otherness could not and would not be cancelled by the social development. On the contrary: what would be cancelled is the *opposite*, namely, the false, conformist and comfortable reception (and creation!) of Art, its spurious integration with the Establishment, its harmonization and sublimation of repressive conditions. Then, perhaps for the first time, men could *enjoy* the infinite sorrow of Beethoven and Mahler because it is overcome and preserved in the reality of freedom. Perhaps for the first time men would *see* with the eyes of Corot, of Cézanne, of Monet because the perception of these artists has helped to form this reality.

The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh

The object of this article is to raise some fundamental questions about the classical Marxist theory of the State in the context of post-colonial societies. The argument is premised on the historical specificity of post-colonial societies, a specificity which arises from structural changes brought about by the colonial experience and alignments of classes and by the superstructures of political and administrative institutions which were established in that context, and secondly from radical re-alignments of class forces which have been brought about in the post-colonial situation. I will draw examples from recent developments in Pakistan and Bangladesh. There are, necessarily, some particular features which are specific to that context. But the essential features which invite a fresh analysis are by no means unique. In particular the special role of the military-bureaucratic oligarchy has become all too common a phenomenon in post-colonial societies. This role now needs to be interpreted in terms of a new alignment of the respective interests of the three propertied exploiting classes, namely the indigenous bourgeoisie, the Metropolitan neo-colonialist bourgeoisies, and the landed classes, under Metropolitan patronage a combination which

is not unique to Pakistan. If a colony has a weak and underdeveloped indigenous bourgeoisie, it will be unable at the moment of independence to subordinate the relatively highly developed colonial State apparatus through which the Metropolitan power had exercised dominion over it. However, a new convergence of interests of the three competing propertied classes, under Metropolitan patronage, allows a bureaucratic-military oligarchy to mediate their competing but no longer contradictory interests and demands. By that token it acquires a relatively autonomous role and is not simply the instrument of any one of the three classes. Such a relatively autonomous role of the state apparatus is of special importance to the neo-colonialist bourgeoisies because it is by virtue of this fact that they are able to pursue their class interests in the post-colonial societies.

A fundamental distinction can be seen between that situation and the situation which followed the bourgeois revolution in European societies on which the classical Marxist theory of the state is based. A distinction may also be made between cases such as that of Pakistan which experienced direct colonial rule and other countries which experienced colonial exploitation under indirect rule. My analysis is confined to an example of the first type. Perhaps comparative analysis will throw light on the similarities and the differences between it and cases of the other type. Such comparative and critical studies are needed before we can hope to arrive at a general theory of the State in post-colonial societies. The purpose of this article will have been served if it focuses on fresh questions that require to be asked in relation to post-colonial societies.

Classical Marxist Theory

A focus on the central role of the bureaucracy and the military in the government and political development of post-colonial societies raises some fundamental questions, especially with reference to the classical marxist theories. What Miliband calls the primary marxist view of the State 'finds its most explicit expression in the famous aphorism of the Communist Manifesto: "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie," and political power is "merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another."' ¹ Miliband adds: 'This is the classical marxist view on the subject of the State and it is the only one which is to be found in marxism-leninism. In regard to Marx himself, however, . . . it only constitutes what may be called a primary view of the State . . . for there is to be found another view of the State in his work . . . This secondary view is that of the State as independent from and superior to all social classes, as being the dominant force in society rather than the instrument of the dominant class.' This secondary view of the State in Marx's work arises from his analysis of the Bonapartist State. Miliband concludes: 'For Marx, the Bonapartist State, however independent it may have been *politically* from any given class, remains, and cannot in a class society but remain, the protector of an economically and socially dominant class.'

¹ R. Miliband, 'Marx and the State', in R. Miliband and J. Seville (eds): *Socialist Register 1965*.

In the post-colonial society, the problem of the relationship between the State and the underlying economic structure is more complex than the context in which it was posed even in the Bonapartist State or other examples which arose in the context of the development of European society. It is structured by yet another historical experience and it calls for fresh theoretical insights.

The military and the bureaucracy in post-colonial societies cannot be looked upon, in terms of the classical marxist view, simply as instruments of a *single* ruling class. The specific nature of structural alignments created by the colonial relationship and re-alignments which have developed in the post colonial situation have rendered the relationship between the state and the social classes more complex. The two patterns of historical development are quite different. In Western societies we witness the creation of the nation state by indigenous bourgeoisies, in the wake of their ascendant power, to provide a framework of law and various institutions which are essential for the development of capitalist relations of production. In colonial societies the process is significantly different.

The bourgeois revolution in the colony insofar as that consists of the establishment of a bourgeois state and the attendant legal and institutional framework, is an event which takes place with the imposition of colonial rule by the metropolitan bourgeoisie. In carrying out the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in the colony, however, the metropolitan bourgeoisie has to accomplish an additional task which was specific to the colonial situation. Its task in the colony is not merely to replicate the superstructure of the state which it had established in the metropolitan country itself. Additionally, it has to create state apparatus through which it can exercise dominion over *all* the indigenous social classes in the colony. It might be said that the 'superstructure' in the colony is therefore 'over-developed' in relation to the 'structure' in the colony, for its basis lies in the metropolitan structure itself, from which it is later separated at the time of independence. The colonial state is therefore equipped with a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and mechanisms of government which enable it through its routine operations to subordinate the native social classes. The post-colonial society inherits that overdeveloped apparatus of state and its institutionalized practices through which the operations of the indigenous social classes are regulated and controlled. At the moment of independence weak indigenous bourgeoisies find themselves enmeshed in bureaucratic controls by which those at the top of the hierarchy of the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the state are able to maintain and even extend their dominant power in society, being freed from direct metropolitan control.

The Essential Problem

The essential problem about the state in post-colonial societies stems from the fact that it is not established by an ascendant native bourgeoisie but instead by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie. At independence, however, the direct command of the latter over the colonial state is ended. But, by the same token, its influence over it is by no means

brought to an end. The metropolitan bourgeoisie, now joined by other neo-colonialist bourgeoisies, is present in the post-colonial society. Together they constitute a powerful element in its class structure. The relationship between neo-colonialist bourgeoisies and the post-colonial state is clearly of a different order from that which existed between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the colonial state. The class basis of the post-colonial state is therefore complex. It is not entirely subordinate to the indigenous bourgeoisie, in view of the power and influence of the neo-colonial bourgeoisie. Nor is it simply an instrument of any of the latter, which would have the implication that independence is a mere sham. Neither bourgeoisie excludes the influence of the other; and their interests compete. The central proposition which I wish to emphasize is that the state in the post-colonial society is not the instrument of a single class. It is relatively autonomous and it mediates between the competing interests of the three propertied classes, namely the metropolitan bourgeoisies, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed classes, while at the same time acting on behalf of them all to preserve the social order in which their interests are embedded, namely the institution of private property and the capitalist mode as the dominant mode of production.

The multi-class relationship of the state in post-colonial societies calls for specific explanation, and an examination of its implications. In this situation the military-bureaucratic oligarchies, the apparatus of the state, furthermore assume also a new and relatively autonomous economic role, which is not paralleled in the classical bourgeois state. The state in the post-colonial society directly appropriates a very large part of the economic surplus and deploys it in bureaucratically directed economic activity in the name of promoting economic development. These are conditions which differentiate the post-colonial State fundamentally from the state as analysed in classical marxist theory.

The apparatus of state does not, however, consist only of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. Where democratic forms of government operate, politicians and political parties too form a part of it. Where political leaders occupy the highest offices in the state, formally invested with authority over the bureaucracy and military, the role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy cannot be evaluated without a clear understanding of the precise role of politicians and political parties in the state, and the extent of their powers and their limitations. Politicians and political parties stand at the centre of a complex set of relationships. On the one hand, they are expected (ideally) to articulate the demands of those from whom they seek support; they are supposed to attempt to realize those demands by their participation in the working of government. On the other hand, they also play a key role in manipulating public relations on behalf of those who do make public policy, to make it acceptable to the community at large. For that they channel public grievances and seek to promote an 'understanding' of the situation concerning public issues which would diminish potential opposition. Their relationship with the bureaucratic-military oligarchy is, therefore, ambivalent; it is competitive as well as complementary. The ambivalence is greater where politicians who occupy high public office can influence the careers of individual members of the bureaucracy or the military.

The Mantle of Legitimacy

There are many variants of the distribution or sharing of power between political leadership and bureaucratic-military oligarchies in post-colonial societies. Political parties at the vanguard of the movement for national independence inherit the mantle of legitimacy and the trappings of political power. Nevertheless, in a large number of post-colonial countries there has been in evidence a progressive attenuation of their power and correspondingly there has been expansion in the power of bureaucratic-military oligarchies, which has often culminated in an overt 'seizure' of power by the latter. In general, however, there has been accommodation as well as tension between political leadership and bureaucratic-military oligarchies. The former do serve a useful purpose for the latter. They confer the mantle of political legitimacy on regimes and, through the charade of democratic process, they absorb public discontent and channel grievances. The role of political parties does not necessarily rule out the relative autonomy of bureaucratic-military oligarchies. The essential issue is that of the relative autonomy of the *state apparatus as a whole* and its *mediatory* role as between the competing interests of the three propertied classes, namely the domestic bourgeoisie, the metropolitan bourgeoisies and the land-owning classes. Insofar as a political leadership participates in the performance of that mediatory role and in the preservation of the relative autonomy of the state apparatus, it is valuable for the purposes of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy; it becomes their partner i.e. a third component of the oligarchy. It is only where political parties seriously challenge that relative autonomy and along with it the mediatory role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy that conflicts arise in which, so far, the latter have prevailed. We have yet to see a clear case of unambiguous control of state power by a political party in a capitalist post-colonial society. The case of India comes nearest to that. But even in India the situation is ambiguous. The ruling Congress Party is by no means a party of a single class; it participates with the bureaucracy in mediating the demands of competing propertied classes, which at the same time participating with it in using state power to uphold the social order which permits the continued existence of those classes, despite the socialist rhetoric of the Congress Party. Even with regard to foreign capital, the actual performance of the government of India is very different from the rhetoric of the Congress politicians.² What is crucial to the present analysis is that behind the apparent power of Congress politicians, the Indian bureaucracy does enjoy a very wide margin of autonomy, on which recent research has thrown some light.³

To understand the way in which relationships between the bureaucratic-military oligarchies and politicians have evolved in India and Pakistan one must look at the historical background of the development of their mutual relationships and especially the institutionalization of a wide measure of bureaucratic and military autonomy. Before independence members of the bureaucracy and the military were the in-

² Hamza Alavi, 'Indian Capitalism and Foreign Imperialism', *New Left Review* 37, June 1966.

³ C. P. Bhambhri, *Bureaucracy and Politics in India*, Delhi 1971.

struments of the colonial power. One of their principal functions was to subordinate the various native classes and to repress the nationalist movement on behalf of their colonial masters. During the freedom struggle, they were on opposite sides of the political barricades from the leadership of the nationalist movement. After independence, the same political leaders whom it was their task to repress were ensconced in office, nominally in authority over them. A new relationship of mutual accommodation had to be established. The experience of partial transfer of power by stages during the twenties and the thirties had, however, already institutionalized procedures by which the bureaucracy could by-pass the political leaders who had been inducted into office, on sufferance under the umbrella of British imperial rule. These institutionalized procedures were extended and consolidated by the proliferation of bureaucratic controls and the fact that, by and large, members of the public have extensive direct, routine dealings with the bureaucracy which do not admit of mediation by political parties. An exception occurs only when individual politicians seek favours from officials for some of their supporters, in which case their relationship vis-a-vis the bureaucracy is weakened rather than strengthened. Politicians are reduced to playing the role of brokers for official favours. This mediation between the public and the bureaucracy is one of the important sources of political power in India⁴ as in other parallel cases. The politician can, however, ill afford to lose the good will of the official, and this influences the overall balance of their collective relationship. The strength of the bureaucracy rests on the extensive proliferation of administrative controls and the direction of a vast array of public agencies engaged in a variety of activities.

Indonesia and Pakistan

The actual pattern of the evolution of relationships between political leaders and bureaucratic-military oligarchies varies from country to country according to differences in historical background and the evolution of political forces. In Indonesia, for example, a long period elapsed before the emergence of the overt power of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy after the overthrow of Sukarno. The underlying factors in that case are complex, but a part of the explanation must be that the bureaucracy and the military in Indonesia had to be radically re-structured after independence and it took some time for the oligarchy to be consolidated. In India and Pakistan, by contrast, powerfully organized bureaucratic and military structures were inherited. In Pakistan, the military was, it is true, in bad shape at the time of independence, but the organization and bases of political parties were still weaker. The ruling Muslim League party leaned heavily on the stature and authority of its leader, Quaide Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who died soon after independence. By that time the Muslim League had begun to disintegrate and its leadership had become isolated from its bases.

In Pakistan two facts stand out in sharp relief in its 25 year history.

⁴ This 'middleman' role of Politicians has been analysed in numerous studies, cf F. G. Bailey, *Politics and Social Change—Orissa 1959*, London 1963.

One is the dominant position of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in the state; it has been in effective command of state power not, as is commonly believed, after the *coup d'état* of October 1958 but, in fact, from the inception of the new state. In the first phase politicians and political parties, who provided a facade of parliamentary government, were manipulated by them and were installed and expelled from office as it suited the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. When in 1958 the prospects of the impending general elections appeared to pose a challenge to the supremacy of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy, those who already held the reins of power 'seized power' by abolishing the institutions of parliamentary government through which the challenge was being mounted. But, nevertheless, the bureaucratic-military oligarchy needed politicians, who fulfil a complementary role, and by 1962 the politicians were put to work again in a parody of democratic politics under Ayub Khan's system of 'Basic Democracy'. That phase ended with the fall of Ayub Khan in 1969, after a great national political upheaval. But still the reins of power were left securely in the hands of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. The latter still needed politicians to fulfill a complementary role in government. President Yahya Khan promised restoration of 'constitutional government' subject to his own veto. An election was held in December 1970 which ended in the political crisis which culminated in the secession of Bangladesh. It is a complex history which I have examined in some detail elsewhere.⁵ In its first phase, the period of 'parliamentary government', the true role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy was obscured by the political fiction under which it operated. After 1958, its dominant and decisive role became manifest. What remains problematic is the social character, affiliations, and commitments of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy, or those of different sections of it, vis-a-vis the various social classes in Pakistan and its different regions, including the metropolitan bourgeoisies which have re-appeared, in the plural, after British colonial rule was ended.

The second outstanding fact about Pakistan's political history is that the most powerful challenges to the dominant central authority of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy came primarily from political movements that drew their strength from people of underprivileged regions and voiced demands for regional autonomy and for a fuller share for the regions in the distribution of material resources as well as in state power. It was not only from East Bengal but also from Sind and Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province or NWFP—the land of the Pathans—that such challenges were mounted. Support for regional autonomy became an article of faith with the radical and left wing political groups—indeed most of them were embedded in regionalist movements. It appeared, on the surface, that the radical politics of Pakistan were conditioned primarily by ethnic or linguistic solidarities, rather than class solidarities stretching across regional boundaries. True, radical challenges were directed against class privileges. But such privileges were identified primarily in regional

⁵ Hamza Alavi, 'The Army and the Bureaucracy in Pakistan Politics', in A. Abdel Malek (ed): *Armies et Nations dans les Trois Continents* (forthcoming). Written in 1966, this article was privately circulated.

terms. Politically the demands of radical and left-wing political movements were for a federal parliamentary system of government and for a representation in the upper echelons of bureaucratic (and military) appointments of people from underprivileged regions. These two outstanding facts about Pakistan politics, namely the dominance of a bureaucratic-military oligarchy and the regional basis of challenges directed against it, are essentially two aspects of a single reality of the political situation in Pakistan which centres around the role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy.

Until 1958, the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in Pakistan made and unmade 'Governments' with a succession of Prime Ministers. In 1956 it even instigated the creation of the Republic Party. A new type of constitution was introduced by Ayub Khan in 1962, after his 'seizure of power' through a coup d'état, in 1958. Politicians were put to work again; under Ayub Khan their manipulation was perfected to a fine art. But what is significant here is the anxiety of the military leaders to retain a facade of political government. Thus, after the re-imposition of Martial Law in 1969, President General Yahya Khan was very keen that a political leadership should be installed in office as soon as possible although under the hegemony of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. He promised elections for that purpose and immediately installed a chosen group of civilians as interim ministers. Some of his most influential military advisers were particularly insistent that without politicians in office, the military would become directly the object of public disaffection, that it would lose its mantle of political legitimacy, and that as a consequence its assumed right to intervene at every moment of crisis would be jeopardized. Thus it would be simplistic to take for granted that the bureaucratic-military oligarchy necessarily prefers to rule directly in its own name. It often prefers to rule through politicians so long as the latter do not impinge upon its own relative autonomy and power. For the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in Pakistan the elections of December 1970, however, had disconcerting results, and the crisis of 1971 ensued, resulting in the secession of Bangladesh.

Bhutto and the Army

The assumption of power by President Bhutto after the defeat of the Pakistan army in Bangladesh can be seen in a similar light. Here was a traumatic moment of crisis. It was a moment when the oligarchy more than ever needed a political leadership which would be able to manipulate an explosive political situation. Bhutto's political position in the country and the fact that his services were indispensable for the oligarchy gave him a degree of freedom. Nevertheless the dismissal by him of a clutch of generals after the assumption of power should not be taken simply as evidence of a final defeat of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy, for Bhutto is closely allied to powerful factions in the oligarchy and his actions reflect the demands of those factions. Bhutto 'dismissed' General Yahya Khan and his associates and appointed his friend General Gul Hassan as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army, having himself assumed the office of President. But it would be a mistake to assume that General Gul Hassan was a political nonentity.

whom President Bhutto installed in office simply as his own nominee. General Gul Hassan in fact belonged to a powerful faction in the military establishment. As early as October 1968, before the massive political agitation against President Ayub Khan which followed a month later, was even anticipated, it was already being whispered in the corridors of power in Rawalpindi and Islamabad that Ayub would be removed and that his mostly likely successor would be General Gul Hassan who was then Corps Commander at Multan, one of the two seniormost field appointments in the Pakistan army. In the event, President Ayub outmanoeuvred the faction which was being aligned against him, by resigning and handing over the office of President to the man of his own choosing whom he had appointed as his Commander-in-Chief, namely General Yahya Khan. In turn Yahya Khan successfully protected Ayub Khan from retribution, which was being demanded not only by an angry public but also by powerful elements in the army itself. With Yahya Khan's fall, events had turned a full circle. In the crisis after the military debacle in Bangladesh, the intervention of the political leadership was indispensable for the military-bureaucratic oligarchy. At this moment the political leadership did assume some weight. The fact that the critical struggle for power still lay within the military-bureaucratic oligarchy was, however, soon made manifest when Bhutto had to dismiss General Gul Hassan from the post of Commander-in-Chief and instal in his place the powerful General Tikka Khan, a leader of the 'hawks' in the army who had master-minded the military action in Bangladesh. It could not but have been an unpalatable decision for Bhutto for the appointment was most inept in the context of the political necessity for Bhutto to negotiate with India and Bangladesh for the repatriation of Pakistani prisoners of war, but the supremacy of the army Junta was evidently decisive.

Big Business and the Generals

Factions in the military are based on personal groupings and allegiances, but there are underlying structural factors which influence the gravitations of groups into broader alliances. One can therefore distinguish, on the one hand, 'Conservative Right Wing' Generals. They either come from the wealthier landed families or else they (or their very close relatives) have made substantial fortunes in business. Others have made money in collusion with foreign businesses and foreign powers. Big businessmen in Pakistan have adopted the practice of awarding profitable directorships to retiring Generals, and thus they have tried to establish relationships with factions in the army. As regards dealings with foreign powers, a remarkable fact about the political situation in Pakistan has been the ability of the army to have direct dealings with foreign powers (notably the USA) over the heads of the Government in office. These varieties of affiliations and interests have resulted in powerfully entrenched positions within the army on behalf of the various vested interests. The case of the bureaucracy is parallel, for many bureaucrats come from landed families and have acquired extensive business interests; some have become millionaires.

There is, however, another influence in the army which tends to promote radicalism; but this is potentially radicalism of the right as well as

of the left. The evidence so far, in fact, suggests that ultra right-wing radicalism is the preponderant element in this group. This radicalism derives from the fact that the army is recruited from one of the most impoverished and congested agricultural regions of the country, namely the unirrigated area consisting of Rawalpindi Division of the Punjab and parts of the NWFP. Whereas big farmers in some parts of the country, such as the Canal Colony Districts of the Punjab, have prospered enormously through the so-called 'Green Revolution', the smallholders in the unirrigated region have not benefited from it. Their tiny unproductive holdings do not yield even a bare minimum for their livelihood. Their sons must therefore find outside employment and it is from these districts that the army draws its soldiers and junior officers. These men have strong social grievances, especially because of inflation and the deterioration of their economic situation in recent years, but they have little political education. In general they subscribe to a conspiracy theory of society and imagine, for example, that inflation is due simply to the greed of a few businessmen (the so-called twenty families); they do not see roots of the problem in the economic system itself. The solution therefore, in their eyes, is not to be found in radical economic policies and a transformation of the social system but rather merely in the brutal punishment of 'miscreants'. The same idea of dealing with 'miscreants' was applied by them in Bangladesh. Politically these men have been reared on chauvinism and religious ideology of the extreme right wing. The influence of the Jamaat-e-Islami has been quite considerable amongst them. In recent years, however, the radical rhetoric of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party has caught their imagination. Through them, Bhutto's political position is strongly rooted in the rank and file of the army.

'Hawks' have Objective Basis

There is also a group of Generals who have close affinities and links with the above mentioned second category of army officers and rank and file soldiers. These are the 'army generals' for whom the interests of the army as such take precedence over other considerations. It is among them that the 'hawks' in the army are to be found. The concept of army 'hawks' is not a psychological one as suggested by Tariq Ali.⁶ Rather that term describes commitments which are rooted in the objective conditions and interests of the army. The 'Hawks' have been able to exploit the grievances of the army rank and file and therefore have a powerful position in the army. They thrive on chauvinism, for only on the basis of an aggressively chauvinistic ideology can they enforce increasing demands on national resources for a larger and better equipped (and more privileged) army. The massive re-armament and re-organisation of the Indian army in the last decade, following its confrontation with China, has altered the military balance in South Asia, a fact which was brought home to the Pakistani oligarchy in no uncertain terms after the debacle in Bangladesh. This will make the old policy of confrontation with India no longer credible. This confrontation has been a source of embarrassment to the two super-powers, the

⁶ Tariq Ali, 'The Struggle in Bangladesh', *New Left Review* 68 (July-August 1971), Footnote 21, p. 43.

USA and the USSR, who have attempted for more than a decade to bring about a rapprochement between India and Pakistan. They will no doubt use their influence to restrain the 'hawks' in the army and to strengthen the hands of the 'conservative right-wing' Generals to this end. Nevertheless, the fact that the oligarchy has so far resisted the efforts of the two super-powers in this respect despite pressure for over a decade, reflects its relative autonomy; such a rapprochement would encroach on the interests of the army.

Both the bureaucracy and the military in Pakistan are highly developed and powerful in comparison with their indigenous class bases. Capitalist development in Pakistan has taken place under their corrupt patronage and close control by the bureaucracy. Because of bureaucratic controls, business opportunities have been restricted to a privileged few who have established the necessary relationship with the bureaucracy, essentially based on the cash nexus. In the late sixties the Chief economist to the Government of Pakistan revealed that 20 privileged families owned 66 per cent of Pakistan's industry, 79 per cent of its insurance and 80 per cent of its banking and that most of the rest was owned by foreign companies. That revelation, in a pre-election year, is itself an indication of the ambivalent relationship between the bureaucracy and the indigenous bourgeoisie. Even so, the local monopolists do not control any political party which can be said to represent them as a class. Indeed, the bases of political parties are primarily rural. The influence of the business community on the conduct of public affairs is primarily through its direct contact with and influence on the bureaucracy itself.

Landowning and Party Politics

Under parliamentary democracy landowners, who hold sway over the countryside, monopolize the field of party politics. They are elected to places in the national and provincial legislatures. (Even in East Bengal, where there are no big landowners comparable to those in West Pakistan, 'Sardari lineages' of rich landholders control the local votes.) The bureaucracy and the army recruit their senior officers largely from rich rural families and therefore the landowning classes have a built-in position within the oligarchy. The bureaucrats have a direct stake in the privileges of the landed classes. This link has been greatly reinforced by the grant of land to civilian and military officers, who have thereby become substantial landowners in their own right when they were not so already. Because of that fact landowners have been able to pursue their class interests effectively, despite occasional attempts by the indigenous bourgeoisie and the Metropolitan bourgeoisies to alter that state of affairs. Agricultural incomes for example, are exempt from income tax. For two decades the bourgeoisie and their foreign allies have pressed the demand that these huge incomes be subjected to tax in order to raise resources for a larger development plan, in which their own interests lie. The landed classes have not only resisted that attempt successfully; they have also obtained large subsidies of which the lion's share goes to the rich farmers and the big landlords. Nevertheless, landlords as a class, despite their close and effective links with the bureaucracy and their dominant role in party

politics, cannot be said to have command over the bureaucracy. Many instances can be shown in which the interests of landowners as a class have been subordinated to those of the bourgeoisie, for example in the price policy for raw cotton, which has worked to the disadvantage of the landowners and to the benefit of the business magnates who own textile mills.

Foreign Business and the Oligarchy

Foreign businessmen like others, have sought bureaucratic favours, and have not failed to obtain them. In their case, private corruption is reinforced by governmental pressure; the greatest pressure is exercised by the Government of the United States. I have examined elsewhere ways in which us Aid has been used to enforce policies on Pakistan in support of us business to the detriment of domestic interests.⁷ Competition exists not only between us and indigenous business interests but also between competing Metropolitan bourgeoisies, viz British, German, French, Japanese, Italian and others. None of them has complete command over the bureaucracy nor do they command it collectively. Neo-colonialism is, however, probably the greatest beneficiary of the relative autonomy of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. It is precisely such a relatively autonomous role that renders the government of the post-colonial society sufficiently open to admit the successful intrusion of neo-colonialist interests in the formulation of public policy. Great emphasis is therefore placed by western ideologues on the importance of the bureaucracy as an 'agent of modernization'. Every effort is made to influence the bureaucracy ideologically in favour of policies which are in conformity with metropolitan interests. This ideology is expressed in the form of 'techniques of planning' and it is presented as an objective science of economic development. The western educated bureaucrat is regarded as the bearer of western rationality and technology and his role is contrasted with that of 'demagogic' politicians who voice 'parochial' demands. Considerable resources are devoted in the metropolitan countries to imparting training to bureaucrats of the post-colonial countries. But there are also more direct methods of influencing their outlook and policy orientations. International agencies and aid administering agencies who vet viability of projects, advise on development planning and channellize policies of post-colonial governments along lines which suit the metropolitan countries. Influence on state policy through foreign aid as well as private corruption of bureaucrats makes this possible, even when some of the policies are blatantly against the interests of the country. Those who tend to assume the existence of mutuality in the processes of international negotiations and who suppose that if a government of a post-colonial country has agreed to a certain course of policy, it must therefore be in the interest of their country, should recognize this disjuncture between the interests of the country (however defined) and those of the corrupt bureaucracy and individual bureaucrats.

⁷ Hamza Alavi & Amir Khuroo, 'Pakistan: The Burden of US Aid,' *New University Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Autumn 1962) reprinted in R. L. Rhodes (ed) *Imperialism and Underdevelopment*, 1970.

Pakistan's experience suggests that none of the three propertied classes in that post-colonial society namely, the indigenous bourgeoisie, the neo-colonialist metropolitan bourgeoisies nor the landowning classes, exclusively command the state apparatus; the influence and power of each is offset by that of the other two. Their respective interests are not mutually congruent or wholly compatible. They do have certain basic interests in common; above all, that of the preservation of the existing social order, based upon the institution of private property. But they make competing demands on the post-colonial state and on the bureaucratic-military oligarchy which represents the state. The latter mediates and arbitrates between the competing demands of the three propertied classes. This is a historically specific role of the military and the bureaucracy, the apparatus of the state in post-colonial societies. The reason for its distinctive role stems from the fact that in contrast to the ascendant bourgeoisie in an independent Capitalist state or the metropolitan bourgeoisie in a colony, both of which establish their dominance over other social classes, in post-colonial societies none of the three propertied classes exclusively dominates the state apparatus or subordinates the other two. This specific historical situation confers on the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in a post-colonial society a *relatively autonomous* role.

A Distinct Relative Autonomy

There are two senses in which the idea of '*relative autonomy*' of elements of the superstructure (such as the state), in relation to the underlying 'structure' i.e. the economic foundations of society (the relations of production) has been discussed in marxist literature, which might be clarified at this point. One is a basic philosophical sense, namely that historical materialism does not mean that elements of the 'superstructure' are determined mechanistically by the underlying structure; but that the formative influence of the latter although mediated in a complex way, is the ultimate determinant of the superstructure. This was emphasized by Engels in his well-known letter to Joseph Bloch in which he criticized mechanistic and deterministic interpretations of 'vulgar Marxism'. This fundamental, philosophical, issue should be distinguished from another, theoretical, issue. The idea of 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure is put forward in this second context as a theory, i.e. as an explanation of the relationship between the state and the underlying 'structure' in certain (exceptional) historical situations. Marx's analysis of the bonapartist State deals with the most extreme case of the relative autonomy of the State from amongst such historical examples analysed by Marx and Engels. However, in classical marxism, in the fundamental philosophical sense as well as in the specific theoretical sense, the idea of the 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure (or the state) was conceived of explicitly within the framework of a society subject to the hegemony of a *single ruling class*. The issue in relation to the post-colonial societies is fundamentally different and should be distinguished clearly from the issues which underlay earlier discussions. The classical position is summed up by Poulantzas who wrote: 'When Marx designated Bonapartism as the "religion of the bourgeoisie", in other words as characteristic of all

forms of the capitalistic State, he showed that this State can only truly serve the ruling class in so far as it is relatively autonomous from the *diverse fractions of this class*, precisely in order to organize *the hegemony of the whole of this class*.' (emphasis added)⁸ Such a proposition cannot apply to a discussion of post-colonial societies in which the problem arises not with reference to 'diverse fractions' of a single class, the bourgeoisie, but rather with reference to three different propertied classes, which do not constitute 'a whole', for they have different structural bases and competing class interests.

In post-colonial societies the phenomenon of the relative autonomy of the state apparatus is therefore of a different order to that which is found in the historical cases on which the classical Marxist theory of state is based. The role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in post-colonial societies is only *relatively* autonomous, because it is determined within the matrix of a class society and not outside it, for the preservation of the social order based on the institution of private property unites all the three competing propertied social classes. That common commitment situates the bureaucratic-military oligarchy within the social matrix. Nevertheless, the role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy is relatively *autonomous* because, once the controlling hand of the metropolitan bourgeoisie is lifted at the moment of independence no single class has exclusive command over it. This relative autonomy is not predicated on that negative condition alone. It derives also from the positive conditions which stem from the far reaching interventions by the state in the economies of post-colonial countries, both by way of a network of controls, in which the vested interests of the bureaucracy are embedded, and a direct appropriation and disposition of a substantial proportion of the economic surplus. These constitute independent material bases of the autonomy of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. There are perhaps parallels here in the changing role of the state in metropolitan societies also; a question which we cannot pursue here. It could be argued, however, that given the role of the State in 'promoting economic development' in post-colonial societies, the difference between the two situations is of a qualitative order. This role, it should be added, is closely interlinked with imperialist interventions in post-colonial societies, especially through the administration of economic and military aid.

Mediating Three Interests

The mediating role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy between the competing demands of the three propertied classes is possible in the post-colonial situation because the mutual interests of the latter and their inter-relations are aligned in a qualitatively different way from that which is experienced in other historical circumstances, on which the classical marxist theory of the state is premised. In the post-colonial situation their mutual relations are no longer antagonistic and contradictory; rather they are mutually competing but reconcilable. In the colonies, the classical theory envisages a coalition between the metro-

⁸ Nicos Poulantzas, 'Capitalism and the State', *New Left Review* 58, Nov.-Dec. 1969, p. 74.

politan bourgeoisie, the native 'comprador' bourgeoisie (composed of merchants whose activities complement those of the metropolitan bourgeoisie) and the 'feudal' landowning class. The theory also envisages the interests of the rising native 'national' bourgeoisie to be fundamentally opposed to those of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. The colonial liberation is therefore characterized as the inauguration of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, 'anti-imperialist and anti-feudal' in character, which is premised as a necessary historical stage in the development of the liberated colonial society. The post-colonial state is taken to be the instrument of the ascendant native national bourgeoisie through which its historical purpose is finally accomplished. But this is not what we have actually witnessed in the post-colonial societies. This was noted, for example, by Paul Baran who wrote: 'Its capitalist bourgeois component, confronted at an early stage with the spectre of social revolution, turns swiftly and resolutely against its fellow traveller of yesterday, its mortal enemy of tomorrow (i.e. the industrial proletariat and the peasantry). *In fact it does not hesitate to make common cause with the feudal elements representing the main obstacle to its own development, with the imperialist rulers just dislodged by the national liberation, and with comprador groups threatened by the political retreat of their former principals.*'⁹

It is true that unprecedented challenges from revolutionary movements constitute a most important element in the post-colonial situation in which the three propertied classes stand united in the defense of the established social order. But their political unity would not be possible if they were still divided by irreconcilable contradictions. That is possible because of fundamental differences in the underlying structural alignments, which differentiate the post-colonial situation from other historical parallels. The suggestion by Baran that the new unity of the propertied classes for the defence of the established social order represents a retreat from and an *abandonment* by the native national bourgeoisie of its historic anti-feudal and anti-colonial role because of its fears of the revolutionary challenge which it cannot confront alone, overlooks the fundamental differences in the underlying *structural* alignments in the post-colonial societies from those in the colonial situation on which the classical theory of the role of the native 'national bourgeoisie' was premised.

An accommodation between the native bourgeoisie and the 'feudal' landowning classes is now possible because the task of winning national independence is completed and the structure of the nation state and the institutional and legal framework necessary for capitalist development, products of the bourgeois revolution, already exist, for they were established by the metropolitan bourgeoisie. The native bourgeoisie is not confronted with the historical task of the European bourgeoisie of subordinating feudal power for the purpose of establishing the nation state. On the contrary, now the 'feudal' landowning class complements the political purposes of the native bourgeoisie in the 'democratic' running of the post-colonial state, because it plays a key role in establishing links between the state at the national level and the local-level power structures in the rural areas which it dominates. At that level it

⁹ Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, New York, 1957 pp. 220-1.

also 'contains' potentially revolutionary forces and helps to maintain the 'political equilibrium' of the post-colonial system.

The 'Green Revolution'

As regards economic aspects too, the specific nature of the relationship between the native bourgeoisie and the 'feudal' landowning classes in post-colonial societies, especially in the context of the growth of capitalist farming under the auspices of the big landowners rather than in conflict with them, has made it unnecessary for the native bourgeoisie to seek the elimination of the 'feudal' landowning class for the purposes of capitalist development. The position and the interests of the 'feudal' landowning classes, however, challenged both from within the rural society as well as from 'radical' urban forces. In response to such pressures, perfunctory efforts were made in some countries, soon after independence, to introduce land reforms. By and large, these measures were ineffective, but their ineffectiveness has by no means impeded the development of the native bourgeoisie. In recent years in South Asia, the so-called 'Green Revolution' based on an elite farmer strategy has further helped to resolve the basic problem (for the native bourgeoisie) of increasing the agricultural surplus needed to sustain industrialization and urbanization as well as expanding the domestic market for manufactured goods. Pressures for radical action have diminished and those for mutual accommodation have increased. Contradictions remain, nevertheless, for the elite farmer strategy is having a disruptive effect on the fabric of rural society which may have consequences which reach beyond its confines. This growth of socially 'disruptive' forces in the rural areas, which may contribute powerfully to revolutionary movement, occasions concern on the part of the bourgeoisie, which seeks to consolidate the conservative alliance with the 'feudal' landowning classes to preserve the existing social order rather than contributing to the forces which seek to overthrow the power of the landowning classes in the rural areas.

As regards the relationship between the metropolitan bourgeoisies and the indigenous or 'national' bourgeoisies of the post-colonial societies, their mutual relationship is also quite different from that which is premised in the classical marxist theory. The classical marxist theory postulates a fundamental contradiction between the two. It therefore concludes that the 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution in the colonies, of which independence is only the first phase and which continues in the post-colonial situation, necessarily has an 'anti-imperialistic' character. It is true, of course, that the native bourgeoisie plays an anti-imperialist role and contributes to the national independence movement against the colonial power, but only up to the point of independence. In the post-colonial situation there is a double reorientation of alignments: both of the indigenous bourgeoisie and of the erstwhile 'comprador' class of merchants, building contractors and the like. The latter, unable to compete on equal terms with giant overseas concerns, demand restrictions on the activities of foreign businesses, particularly in the fields in which they aspire to operate. They acquire a new 'anti-imperialist' posture. On the other hand, as the erstwhile 'national' bourgeoisie grows in size and aspires to extend its interests and move

from industries which involve relatively unsophisticated technology, such as textiles, to those which involve the use of highly sophisticated technology such as petro-chemicals and fertilisers, etc., they find that they do not have access to the requisite advanced industrial technologies. Their small resources and scale of operation keep the possibility of developing their own technology, independently, out of their reach. For access to the requisite advanced industrial technology they have to turn for collaboration therefore, to the bourgeoisies of the developed metropolitan countries, or to socialist states. This they do despite the fact that the terms on which the collaboration is offered are such that it hamstrings their own independent future development.

As it grows in size and extends its interests the so-called 'national' bourgeoisie becomes increasingly dependent on the neo-colonialist metropolitan bourgeoisies.

Unequal Collaboration

The concept of a 'national' bourgeoisie which is presumed to become increasingly anti-imperialist as it grows bigger, so that its contradictions with imperialism sharpen further, is one which is derived from an analysis of colonial and not post-colonial experience. The mutual relationship of the native bourgeoisie and the metropolitan bourgeoisies is no longer antagonistic; it is collaborative. The collaboration is, however, unequal and hierarchical, because the native bourgeoisie of a post-colonial society assumes a subordinate, client, status in the structure of its relationship with the metropolitan bourgeoisie. The erstwhile 'anti-imperialist' character of the native 'national' bourgeoisie changes in the post-colonial situation to a collaborationist one. The metropolitan bourgeoisies value their collaboration with the native bourgeoisies of post-colonial societies because that provides a channel through which they pursue their economic interests without political risks attendant on direct investments by themselves. Their agreements with the native bourgeoisie establish captive markets for their products as well as for their technologies.¹⁰ The conditions which underlie the collaboration between the native bourgeoisies and the neo-colonial metropolitan bourgeoisies are therefore embedded not only in super-structural conditions namely, the threat of revolutionary movements to which Baran refers, but also in structural conditions namely, access to technology for their economic operations. It must be emphasized that even though the indigenous 'national' bourgeoisie and the metropolitan bourgeoisies are brought together into a close collaborative and hierarchical relationship they are by no means, by that token, merged into a single class. The concept of collaboration implies and describes the fact of their separateness, and hierarchy implies a degree of conflict between their interests and a tension which underlies their relationship. Convergence of their interests does not dissolve into an identity of interests. It is this element of mutual competition which makes it possible, and necessary, for the bureaucratic-military oligarchies to play a mediatory role.

¹⁰ This development was analysed in: Hamza Alavi, 'Imperialism, Old and New', in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds), *Socialist Register 1964*.

Because of the powerful role of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in postcolonial societies, positions in the oligarchy are of crucial importance, especially for aspiring educated middle class groups; and their political demands are focused on shares of positions in the oligarchy. Where the oligarchy is recruited from a narrow social or regional base, as for example is the case in Pakistan, the unprivileged educated middle class groups who are denied access to positions of influence and power in the oligarchy organize political opposition. 'Moral' principles and ideologies are invoked both by the ruling oligarchy as well as by the opposition to justify their respective interests and to rally public support on their own behalf. Differences of caste, ethnic origin, religion or language dominate the politics of postcolonial societies particularly for that reason. Opposition groups raise slogans of cultural or linguistic identity. On the other hand, the particular ethnic or linguistic (or other sectional) group which has a dominant position in the ruling bureaucratic-military oligarchy invokes in defence of its own particularistic privileges the ideology of 'national solidarity' and denounces the opposition as narrow-minded and divisive particularism. The campaign on behalf of their group is mounted by the bureaucratic-military oligarchy itself. Political issues arising out of the sectional or regional character of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy are therefore merged with broader issues of public policy as they concern different classes of people and in the political debate which ensues, political questions which concern the underlying social and economic issues are often expressed in the idiom of cultural, linguistic or regionalist demands.

In Pakistan, the ruling, predominantly Punjabi, bureaucratic-military oligarchy has taken over and put to its own particular use the slogans of Muslim nationalism, that is the slogans of the movement on the strength of which Pakistan was brought into being. It extols the virtues of 'Islamic solidarity' and denounces linguistic or regionalist opposition movements as divisive provincialism. In this way, after the creation of Pakistan, the nature and political role of Muslim nationalism and the significance of its slogans have altered. Muslim nationalism in India propagated the cause of the under-privileged Muslim educated middle classes of India, who were numerically small and educationally less advanced than those of the Hindus. The creation of Pakistan, the separate homeland of the Muslims, was the fulfillment of that cause. Therefore after the state of Pakistan had been created, the *raison d'être* of that movement ceased to exist. At that point the Muslim League, the principal organ of the movement, disintegrated. The surviving faction, which appropriated the mantle of the Muslim League, now began to propagate its ideology on behalf of the privileged groups, especially the Punjabi oligarchs, in opposition to regionalist challenges. The ideology of Islamic unity was now employed to deny the validity of the claims and demands of the less privileged groups, namely Bengalis, Sindhis, Pathans and Baluchis, for the recognition of their distinct identity and needs.

Bengali Aspirations

The aspirations of Bengalis who (amongst others) challenged the

domination of the 'Punjabi bureaucracy', were expressed in the secular idiom of the Bengali Language Movement which began with the birth of Pakistan itself. It had its first martyrs in 1952. Although the focus of the Movement was on the issue of national language, an issue which by its nature was closest to the hearts of students and the educated lower middle class, it was nevertheless instrumental in creating a radical consciousness which extended beyond the immediate interests of those who voiced the slogans of the language movement and gave it leadership. With an urban population of only 5 per cent of the total population, the educated middle class of Bengal is drawn overwhelmingly from villages and maintains close contact with the rural society. Under conditions of widespread public discontent, the problems and demands of the impoverished rural population influenced the cadres and leaders of the Language Movement and their slogans. But the aspirations of the leadership were concerned primarily with the issue of the regional share in government jobs and, especially, places for themselves in the bureaucratic establishment.

There were, therefore, two traditions in the Bengali movement. One was a petty bourgeois elitist tradition, of those who hoped to rise to senior positions in the bureaucracy or to become members of the newly created business community in Bengal on the strength of governmental financial support and subsidy. The other was a rural populist tradition which articulated the frustrations and aspirations of the long suffering sections of the extremely poor Bengal peasantry. The two traditions were intertwined, but they remained distinct. The educated sons of rich peasants had other aspirations than those of the peasantry in general. In the early fifties, the Bengali Language Movement embraced them both; at the vanguard of that movement was the old Awami League, in the form in which it was then constituted. At the head of the elitist faction of the Awami League was Suhrawardy, who aspired to public office at the cost of popular objectives. As Prime Minister of Pakistan he was an ardent supporter of imperialist powers and went to the extent of openly and vigorously supporting the Anglo-French-Israeli intervention against Egypt at Suez as well as the US alliance. Sheikh Mujib was a protégé of Suhrawardy and was schooled by him in politics; his political commitments were firmly with the elitist group. On the other hand, there was a populist tradition in the Awami League, which flourished under the umbrella of Maulana Bhashani. The elitist leadership was largely concentrated in the towns and cities. The populists had large numbers of cadres on the ground in villages. As the communist party was illegal, there was also a solid core of marxists in the Awami League. Under their influence many of the populist cadres had moved towards explicitly marxist ideas. In February 1957, at the Conference of the Awami League at Kagmari, the conflict between the elitist leadership and the populist cadres was brought to a head on the issue of Prime Minister Suhrawardy's foreign policy. That led to a break, and the ousting of populist cadres of the Awami League along with their leader Maulana Bhashani. They later formed the National Awami Party. The character of the Awami League, which was left in the hands of Suhrawardy and the elitist group, and was deprived of its populist and marxist cadres, was thus transformed. It is crucial to the understanding of the Awami League in its new form that

although its populist cadres were eliminated, its mass populist base amongst the rural people remained with it. By a mistimed and badly managed precipitation of the party crisis, it was the populist cadres who were isolated. In the retention of the Party's hold over the masses, the role of Sheikh Mujib was crucial. This was because, notwithstanding his firm commitments to the elitist group, his rhetoric and even his personal style of life were populist in character. He was a man with whom the people could identify. He bridged the gap between the elitist leadership of the Awami League and its populist mass base.

As the Bengali movement progressed, reluctantly, but inevitably, the dominant Punjabi bureaucratic elite yielded some of the demands of the movement for a fair share of jobs and promotion. As a consequence, by the late sixties, the provincial administration in East Bengal was almost wholly staffed by Bengali civil servants at all levels. Bengali progress was less remarkable in the Central Government. It was not until 1969 that for the first time a few Bengali officers were installed as Secretaries to the Central Government, at the head of some minor Ministries. The bastions of power, namely, the Ministries of Defence, Finance and the Planning Commission and the Establishment Division were still retained securely in trusted West Pakistani hands.

The Bengali movement for equitable treatment reached a new level when, in the late fifties, demands began to be made for a fair and adequate share in the allocation of economic resources for development for East Bengal. East Bengali economists prepared excellent detailed studies which demonstrated the steady exploitation of East Bengal from West Pakistan. Their argument that there should be a radical re-allocation of development resources and a re-alignment of economic policies, as well as demands for bureaucratic appointments, replaced the issue of the language as the principal issue in the Bengali movement. There was also a progressive radicalization of the movement and socialist ideas began to gain ground.

Creating a Bengali Bourgeoisie

In the sixties, President Ayub decided to foster in East Bengal a Bengali bourgeoisie, which, he believed, would provide him with a political base in the province and counter the influence of socialist ideas. This endeavour was blessed and backed by the Pakistani bourgeoisie. But to create a bourgeoisie the regime had to put money into the hands of men who had too little of it. Two categories of people from East Bengal were drawn into the process of 'capital formation' which was devised by the Ayub Regime, to whom we can refer respectively as the 'contractors' and the 'contractors'. The 'contractors' were educated Bengalis with influential bureaucratic contacts (especially those who were relatives of bureaucrats or influential politicians) who were granted all kinds of permits and licenses, which had a ready cash value because they could be sold to West Pakistani businessmen who needed them to be able to engage in profitable business transactions. This process transferred money into the pockets of a parasitic group of people, at the expense of the ordinary consumer who ultimately paid for this corruption in the forms of inflated prices. The 'contractors' lived ex-

pensively, and few of them contributed to capital accumulation or built up industries. The 'contractors' were different. They were small businessmen who were awarded construction contracts, etc., by the Government at deliberately inflated rates. The excess profits made by them were ploughed back into their businesses. They were later encouraged by generous loans and official support to become industrialists. For some industrial projects, for example, the Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan, which was set up for the purpose, would advance about two-thirds of the investment funds required and the East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation would provide half of the remaining third of the total amount. The remaining sixth of the amount had to be raised by the prospective industrialist from his own pocket (already filled with public money) or from the stock exchange. In fact a substantial part of this equity was also subscribed by the State sponsored National Investment Trust and the Investment Corporation of Pakistan. To set up an industry, therefore, the budding Bengali industrialists needed barely 10 per cent (or less) of the capital needed. But profits were so high that it did not take long before they became sole owners of their industries and began to multiply their new found fortunes.

The attitude of the newly created nucleus of the Bengali bourgeoisie towards the politics of Bengali nationalism was one of qualified support. They profited greatly from the pressures created by that politics. But, at the same time, they were apprehensive because of its leftward gravitation. Moreover, their extraordinary privileges were brought into existence because there was a Central Government which could be pressured. The continuance of their privileges in an independent East Bengal was perhaps a little problematic. Not all of them supported the movement wholeheartedly; they also provided support for right wing movements in East Bengal, and collaborated with the ruling oligarchy. They were particularly demoralized after the Winter of 1968-9, when nationwide protest against the Ayub Regime, which brought about its downfall, threatened to develop into a revolutionary movement, especially in East Bengal. Many of them transferred substantial amounts to safer investments in politically more 'stable' West Pakistan or, illegally, abroad. While they supported a movement for regional autonomy and diversion of a larger share of economic resources to East Bengal, they also looked upon the bureaucratic-military oligarchy, which is based in West Pakistan, as a bulwark for the defence and protection of their own class interests; they therefore valued the link with West Pakistan. The movement for the independence of East Bengal cannot, therefore, be explained by reference principally to the aspirations of the Bengali bourgeoisie. Moreover, in assessing the class basis of that movement, one must take into account the fact that the movement existed and flourished before the Bengali bourgeoisie was brought into being. The class base of that movement was essentially petty bourgeois.

The massive electoral success of the Awami League in the election of December 1970 was guaranteed by a third category of people who had jumped on the bandwagon of the Awami League. That was the rural elite in Bengal, which was previously divided into many factions. The

countryside in Bengal is dominated by lineages of big farmers, the 'Sardari lineages'. Their wealth, status and power, much of which is derived from moneylending, enabled them to have access to the bureaucracy, on the strength of which they mediated on behalf of their factional supporters and thus further consolidate their local political power. These locally powerful rich farmers aligned with the elitists of the Awami League; the latter were after all their sons who had been given a university education and who aspired to big jobs in the bureaucracy.

Despite the radical rhetoric of the elitists in the Awami League, their intensions vis-a-vis the West Pakistan based oligarchy were quite ambivalent. This was because the elitist leaders were apprehensive about the radical aspirations of their own populist political base. While, on the one hand, they exploited the latter's radical sentiments in order to generate some force with which to confront those who were in power in West Pakistan and to gain some concessions, they had little wish to allow the radicalism of their followers to overwhelm them and to threaten the social order to which their own elitist aspirations committed them. It is this ambivalence which explains the anxiety of Sheikh Mujib to continue negotiations with General Yahya Khan in the first few weeks of March 1971 for autonomy within Pakistan, notwithstanding the fact that, as a consequence of an effective general strike in East Bengal he was already in *de facto* control of state power in the province; and that at a time when the Pakistan army was numerically weak and was unprepared for the action which it later launched against the people in East Bengal. This was testified to by Tajuddin Ahmed, the Prime Minister of the Bangladesh Provisional Government who, on the eve of his return to liberated Dacca, told newsmen that '*The original demand for autonomy within the framework of Pakistan had been raised by the Awami League as a whole but the demand for independence grew when Pakistan not only refused to grant autonomy but also unleashed a reign of terror on the people of East Bengal.*'¹¹

The Making of Bangladesh

Since the creation of Bangladesh, the confrontation between the elitist element in the Awami League and its populist bases has re-emerged on a new level. Whereas the elitist leadership found a safe haven in Calcutta, the populist and marxist political cadres, who were once isolated, now established a new relationship with the people in the course of their armed liberation struggle. The organization and strength of the armed resistance was not yet strong enough to overthrow the Pakistani army; but it was growing. Moreover the position of the Pakistani army was reaching a point of crisis because the weak economy of West Pakistan could not sustain the long military campaign. There was an economic crisis in West Pakistan and outbursts of discontent. That opened up new prospects for the advance of the liberation forces in Bengal. It was precisely at that moment that the Indians chose to intervene, to forestall the liberation of Bangladesh by popular forces and to install the Awami League elitist leadership in power.

¹¹ *The Times*, London, 23 December, 1971.

The picture in Bangladesh today is fundamentally different from that which existed in Pakistan at the time of its independence in 1947. The Bengali bureaucracy exists and the Awami League regime has identified itself with it and with the privileged groups in the country, but these are not backed by substantial military forces. On the other hand, the populist forces have experienced armed struggle and in the course of it they have developed organizationally. Large quantities of arms are in their possession. True, 'anti-insurgency groups' were also given training in India and were armed to prepare for the day after the liberation of Bangladesh. For the present all the political skill of Sheikh Mujib is directed to persuading the popular forces to hand over their arms or to become integrated in the organized military forces of Bangladesh—but with little success. It may yet be that a new bureaucratic-military oligarchy with outside aid will consolidate its position and power in course of time in Bangladesh. But it is equally possible that Bangladesh will be plunged into an armed revolutionary struggle, for the instruments of coercive state power at the disposal of the Awami League and the Bengali bureaucracy are weak and the economic crisis runs deep.

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Dependency and Development in Latin America

The theory of imperialist capitalism, as is well known, has so far attained its most significant treatment in Lenin's works. This is not only because Lenin attempts to explain transformations of the capitalist economies that occurred during the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, but mainly because of the political and historical implications contained in his interpretations. In fact, the descriptive arguments of Lenin's theory of imperialism were borrowed from Hobson's analysis. Other writers had already presented evidence of the international expansion of the capitalist economies and nations. Nevertheless, Lenin, inspired by Marx's views, was able to bring together evidence to the effect that economic expansion is meaningless if we do not take into consideration the *political* and *historical* aspects with which economic factors are intimately related. From Lenin's perspective, imperialism is a new form of the capitalist mode of production. This new form cannot be considered as a *different* mode of economic organization, in so far as capital accumulation based on private ownership of the means of production and exploitation

of the labour force remain the basic features of the system. But its significance is that of a new *stage* of capitalism. The historical 'momentum' was a new one, with all the political consequences of that type of transformation: within the dominant capitalist classes, new sectors tried to impose their interests and ideologies; the State, the Army and all basic social and political institutions were redefined in order to assure expansion abroad. At the same time new types of liberation and social struggles came onto the historical scene—the colonial liberation movements and the fight against 'trade unionism', the latter a struggle against an initial form of working class compromise with the bourgeoisie made possible by the exploitation of the colonial world.

From that broad picture of a new historical stage of capitalist development Lenin inferred new political tasks, tactics and strategies for socialist revolution.

Lenin's Characterization of Imperialism

The main points of Lenin's characterization of imperialism that are essential to the present discussion can be summarized as follows:

a) the capitalist economy in its 'advanced stages' involves a concentration of capital and production (points that were well established by Marx in *Capital*) in such a way that the competitive market is replaced in its basic branches by a monopolistic one.

b) this trend was historically accomplished through internal differentiation of capitalist functions, leading not only to the formation of a financial stratum among entrepreneurs but to the marked prominence of the banking system in the capitalist mode of production. Furthermore, the fusion of industrial capital with financial capital under the control of the latter turned out to be the decisive feature of the political and economic relations within capitalist classes, with all the practical consequences that such a system of relations has in terms of state organization, politics and ideology.

c) capitalism thus reached its 'ultimate stage of development' both internally and externally. Internally, control of the productive system by financiers turned the productive forces and the capital accumulation process toward the search for new possibilities for investment. The problem of 'capital realization' became in this way an imperative necessity to permit the continuing of capitalist expansion. In addition there were internal limits that impeded the continuous reinvestment of new capital (impoverishment of the masses, a faster rate of capital growth than that of the internal market, and so on.) *External outlets* had to be found to ensure the continuity of capitalist advance and accumulation.

d) the increased and increasing speed of the development of productive forces under monopolistic control also pushed the advanced capitalist countries toward the political control of foreign lands. The search for control over *raw materials* is yet another reason why capitalism in its monopolistic stage becomes expansionist.

In short, Lenin's explanations of why advanced capitalist economies were impelled toward the control of backward lands, was based on two main factors. One stressed movements of capital, the other outlined the productive process. Both were not only linked to each other but also related to the global transformation of the capitalist system that had led to the control of the productive system by financiers. It is not difficult to see that such modifications deeply affected state organization and functions as well as the relationships among nations, since a main thrust of capitalist development in the stage of imperialism was toward the territorial division of the world among the leading capitalist countries. This process guaranteed capital flows from the over-capitalized economies to backward countries and assured provision of raw materials in return.

Imperialism and Dependent Economies

From that perspective, the consequence of imperialism with respect to dependent economies and nations (or colonies) was the integration of the latter into the international market. Inequality among nations and economies resulted from imperialism's development to the extent that import of raw materials and export of manufactured goods were the bases of the imperialist-colonial relationship. The reproduction and amplification of inequality between advanced economies and dependent economies developed as a by-product of the very process of capitalist growth.

Certainly, Lenin was aware of particular types of interconnections, as in Argentina and other economies dependent on Great Britain, where local bourgeoisies controlled sectors of the productive system creating more complex patterns of exploitation. The same was true with respect to the political aspects of dependency in those countries where the state tried to defend the national bourgeoisie against imperialist pressures.

Nevertheless, from the theoretical point of view, as a mode of exploitation, imperialism should tend to restrict the economic growth of backward countries to mineral and agricultural sectors in order to assure raw materials for the advanced capitalist nations in their drive for further industrialization. For the same reasons the indigenous labour force could be kept at low wage and salary levels. By that means the dominant central economies were assured of cheap raw material prices. Consequently, in colonized or dependent nations, internal markets did not have any special strategic significance.

Of course, in terms of 'capital realization', selling products abroad had importance. But even so, the main imperialistic tie in terms of direct capital investment was oriented toward the concession of loans to the dependent State or to private local entrepreneurs. In both cases, however, political and financial guarantees were assured by the State or the administration of the receiver country.

In short, imperialist profit was based on unequal trade and financial exploitation. The latter could be measured by the increasing indebted-

ness of exploited economies to the central economies. The former was evidenced through the different types of products exchanged, i.e. raw materials for manufactured goods. This process of exploitation of the indigenous labour force thus insured an unevenness in both types of economies. Moreover, technological advances in the industrial sectors of central economies provided a high level of exploitation, increasing the relative surplus value extracted through a continuously advancing technology of production (leading in turn to unevenness of the rate of organic composition of capital), while in the dominated economies the direct over-exploitation of labour prevailed in the productive system.

Politically, this type of economic expansion thus reinforced colonial links, through wars, repression and subjugation of peoples that previously were not only marginal to the international market, but were culturally independent and structurally did not have links with the Western world. Such were the African and Asian regions where nations, in spite of previous commercial-capitalist expansion, remained largely untouched in terms of their productive systems.

Latin America from the beginning was somewhat different in its links to the imperialist process. It is true that this process of colonialistic penetration obtained with respect to some countries (mainly the Caribbean nations). Yet throughout most of Latin America, the imperialistic upsurge occurred by way of a more complex process, through which Latin American countries kept their political independence, but slowly shifted from subordination to an earlier British influence to American predominance.

Ownership of the productive system was the site of the main differences. Some Latin American economies, even after imperialist predominance, were able to cope with the new situation by maintaining proprietorship of the local export economy in the hands of native bourgeoisies. Thus in some countries (such as Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Chile), the export sector remained at least to some extent controlled by the local bourgeoisie and the links of dependence were based more on trade and financial relations than directly on the productive sectors. In some countries the internal financial system was itself mainly dominated by internal bankers, and financial dependence was based on international loans contracted, as noted above, by the State or under State guarantees¹.

In spite of numerous political and economic variations, Lenin's basic picture remained valid: the internal market of Latin American countries grew in a limited way during the period of the first imperialist expansion; the industrial sector was not significantly expanded; external financial dependence grew enormously; raw materials including food-stuffs constituted the basis of export economies.

At the same time not only were the majority of Latin American

¹ See, F. H. Cardoso, and E. Faletto, *Dependencia y Desarrollo en America Latina*, Mexico, 1972.

countries unable to keep control of the export sector, but some of the countries that had previously retained dominance of raw materials or food production, now lost that capacity (as in the Chilean mineral economy).

New Patterns of Capital Accumulation

In spite of the accuracy of Lenin's insights as measured against historical events during the first half of the century in many parts of the world, some important recent changes have deeply affected the pattern of relationship between imperialist and dependent nations. These changes demand a reappraisal of emergent structures and their main tendencies. Even if these modifications are not so deep as the shift that enabled Lenin to characterize a new stage of capitalism during the period of imperialist expansion, they are marked enough to warrant a major modification of the established analyses of capitalism and imperialism. Nevertheless, contemporary international capitalist expansion and control of dependent economies undoubtedly prove that this new pattern of economic relationships among nations remains imperialist. However, the main points of Lenin's characterization of imperialism and capitalism are no longer fully adequate to describe and explain the present forms of capital accumulation and external expansion.

With respect to changes that have occurred within the more advanced capitalist economies (chiefly the rise of monopoly capital and corporate enterprise) there are some consistent analyses. Baran and Sweezy's works, as well as those of Magdoff, Mandel and O'Connor, come to mind. These offer a comprehensive body of descriptive and explanatory material showing the differences between capitalism now and during Lenin's life.

In spite of some recent criticism, Baran and Sweezy argued convincingly (and Sweezy's article on 'The Resurgence of Financial Control: Fact or Fancy?'² helps to affirm that conviction) that corporations operate as a quasi-self-sufficient units of decision and action vis-à-vis capital accumulation. Hence previous notions of banking control over industry need to be rethought. Similarly, the conglomerate form of present big corporations and the multinational scope of the production and marketing adds considerable novelty to the capitalist form of production.³

These transformations (and we are only suggesting some of the principal ones which affect all processes of capitalist transformation) have led to important consequences that have been already analysed by the authors noted, as well as others. These writers stress, for instance, the increasing secular growth of profit rates under administered prices in a monopoly system. Of course, this is a central point in Marxian theory and in Lenin's analysis. Yet now important modifica-

² See, P. Sweezy, 'The Resurgence of Financial Control: Fact or Fancy?' *Socialist Revolution*, No. 8, Vol. 2, No. 2, March-April 1972, pp. 157-192.

³ See, H. Magdoff, and P. Sweezy, 'Notes on the Multinational Corporation' in Fann and Hodges, *Readings in U.S. Imperialism*, Boston, 1972, pp. 93-116.

tions, such as those mentioned, alter the type of political response that the capitalist system is able to produce in order to cope with the challenging situations created by its expansion.

It is equally necessary to approach the problem of surplus realization with a fresh perspective. In this connection some authors have considered the strengthened ties between militarist expansion and the reinforcement of military control over society, through a war economy, as the basic means of capital realization. As a second argument, but a still important factor, State expenditures in welfare are emphasized as alternative outlets for capital accumulation.

Though the adequacy of this analysis may be questioned, Marxist authors have carried out a fairly comprehensive *economic* reinterpretation of the mode of functioning of monopoly capitalism. The same is not true, however, when one considers the *political* aspects of the problem and especially the *politico-economic* consequences of monopoly capitalism in dependent economies. Let us start with the last aspect of the question.

New Forms of Economic Dependency

Recent figures demonstrate (see Tables I and II) that foreign investment in the new nations and in Latin America is moving rapidly away from oil, raw materials and agriculture and in the direction of the industrial sectors. Even where the bulk of assets continues to remain in the traditional sectors of imperialist investment, the rate of expansion of the industrial sector is rapid. This is true not only for Latin America but also for Africa and Asia.

The point is not only that multinational corporations are investing in the industrial sectors of dominated economies, instead of in the traditional agricultural and mineral sectors. Beyond that, even when 'traditional' sectors of dependent economies, they are operating in technically and organizationally advanced modes, sometimes accepting local participation in their enterprises. Of course, these transformations do not mean that previous types of imperialistic investment, i.e. in oil

TABLE I
Growth of the American direct investment—1929 to 1968

	VALUE U.S. \$ 10 ²				RATE OF GROWTH		PER CENT OF PARTICIPATION		
	1929	1950	1960	1968	1950-60	1960-68	1950	1960	1968
<i>All Regions</i>	9,5	11,8	31,9	64,8	10,4	9,3	100	100	100
Canada	2,0	3,6	11,2	19,5	12,0	7,2	31	36	30
Latin America	3,5	4,6	8,4	13,0	6,2	5,6	39	26	20
Europe	1,4	1,7	6,7	19,4	14,7	12,4	14	21	30
Other areas	0,6	1,9	5,6	12,9	11,4	11,0	16	17	20
<i>Sectors</i>									
Manufacturing	1,8	3,8	11,1	26,4	11,3	11,5	32	35	41
Oil	1,1	3,4	10,8	18,8	12,3	7,2	29	34	29
Mining	1,2	1,1	3,0	5,4	10,6	7,6	9	9	8
Others	3,4	3,5	7,0	14,2	7,2	9,3	30	22	22

SOURCE: *Survey of Current Business*; ECLA analysis.

In F. Fajnzylber, *Estrategia Industrial y Empresas Internacionales*, United Nations, ECLA, Rio, November 1971.

or metals, are disappearing, even in the case of the most industrialized dependent economies, i.e., Argentina, Brazil and Mexico in Latin America. However, the dominant traits of imperialism in those countries, as the process of industrialization continues, cannot be adequately described and interpreted on the basis of frames of reference that posit the exchange of raw material for industrialized goods as the main feature of trade, and suppose virtually complete external ownership of the dependent economies' means of production.

Even the mineral sector (such as manganese in Brazil, copper in Chile during Frei's government, or petro-chemicals in various countries) is now being submitted to new patterns of economic ownership. The distinguishing feature of these new forms is the joint venture enterprise, comprising local state capital, private national capital and monopoly international investment (under foreign control in the last analysis).

As a consequence, in some dependent economies—among these, the so called 'developing countries' of Latin America—foreign investment no longer remains a simple zero-sum game of exploitation as was the pattern in classical imperialism. Strictly speaking—if we consider the purely economic indicators—it is not difficult to show that *development* and *monopoly penetration* in the industrial sectors of dependent economies are not incompatible. The idea that there occurs a kind of development of underdevelopment, apart from the play on words, is not helpful. In fact, *dependency*, *monopoly capitalism* and *development* are not contradictory terms: there occurs a kind of *dependent capitalist development* in the sectors of the Third World integrated into the new forms of monopolistic expansion.

TABLE II
Percentage of United States direct investments in
manufacturing compared with total US
direct investment (%)

YEARS	TOTAL FOR LATIN AMERICA	ARGENTINA	BRAZIL	MEXICO	OTHER COUNTRIES
1929	7	25	24	1	4
1940	8	20	29	3	3
1946	13	39	39	21	6
1950	18	45	44	32	7
1952	21	50	51	43	1
1955	22	51	51	45	7
1956	22	51	50	46	8
1959	17	43	53	47	7
1960	19	45	54	49	8
1961	20	43	54	50	7
1962	22	51	56	51	8
1963	24	55	59	55	8
1964	26	57	67	59	9
1965	29	62	67	64	11
1966	31	63	68	64	12
1967	32	63	67	66	13
1968	34	64	69	68	14

SOURCE: *Survey of Current Business*, several numbers. *U.S. Investments in Latin America*: ECLA analysis.

In F. Fajnzylber, op. cit., p. 204.

As a result in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, India, and some others, there is an internal structural fragmentation, connecting the most 'advanced' parts of their economies to the international capitalist system. Separate although subordinated to these advanced sectors, the backward economic and social sectors of the dependent countries then play the role of 'internal colonies'. The gap between both will probably increase, creating a new type of dualism, quite different from the imaginary one sustained by some non-Marxist authors. The new structural 'duality' corresponds to a kind of internal differentiation of the same unity. It results directly, of course, from capitalist expansion and is functional to that expansion, in so far as it helps to keep wages at a low level and diminishes political pressures inside the 'modern' sector, since the social and economic position of those who belong to the latter is always better in comparative terms.

If this is true, to what extent is it possible to sustain the idea of *development* in tandem with dependence? The answer cannot be immediate. First of all I am suggesting that the present trend of imperialist investment allows some degree of local participation in the process of economic production. Let us indicate a crucial feature in which present and past forms of capitalism differ. During the previous type of imperialism, the market for goods produced in dependent economies by foreign enterprise was mostly, if not fully, the market of the advanced economies: oil, copper, coffee, iron bauxite, manganese, etc., were produced to be sold and consumed in the advanced capitalist countries. This explains why the internal market of dependent economies was irrelevant for the imperialist economies, excepting the modest portion of import goods consumed by the upper class in the dominated society.

Today for G.M. or Volkswagen, or General Electric, or Sears Roebuck, the Latin American market, if not the particular market in each country where those corporations are producing in Latin America, is the immediate goal in terms of profit. So, at least to some extent, a certain type of foreign investment needs some kind of internal prosperity. There are and there will be some parts of dependent societies, tied to the corporate system, internally and abroad, through shared interests.

On the other hand, and in spite of internal economic development, countries tied to international capitalism by that type of linkage remain economically dependent, insofar as the production of the means of production (technology) are concentrated in advanced capitalist economies (mainly in the us).

In terms of the Marxist scheme of capital reproduction, this means that sector I (the production of means of production)—the strategic part of the reproductive scheme—is virtually non-existent in dependent economies. Thus, from a broad perspective, the realization of capital accumulation *demands* a productive complementarity which does not exist within the country. In Lenin's interpretation the imperialist economies needed external expansion for the realization of capital accumulation. Conversely, within the dependent economies

capital returns to the metropole in order to complete the cycle of capitalist reproduction. That is the reason why 'technology' is so important. Its 'material' aspect is less impressive than its significance as a form of maintenance of control and as a necessary step in the process of capital accumulation. Through technological advantage, corporations make secure their key roles in the global system of capital accumulation. Some degree of local prosperity is possible insofar as consumption goods locally produced by foreign investments can induce some dynamic effects in the dependent economies. But at the same time, the global process of capitalist development determines an interconnection between the sector of production of consumption goods and the capital goods sector, reproducing in this way the links of dependency.

One of the main factors which explained imperialist expansion in Lenin's theory was the search for capitalist investment. Now since foreign capital goes to the industrial sector of dependent economies in search of external markets, some considerable changes have occurred. First, in comparison with expanding assets of foreign corporations, the net amount of foreign capital actually invested in the dependent economies is decreasing: local savings and the reinvestment of profits realized in local markets provides resources for the growth of foreign assets with limited external flow of new capital. This is intimately related to the previously discussed process of expansion of the local market and it is also related to the mounting of 'joint ventures' linking local capitalists and foreign enterprise. (See Table III).

Secondly, but no less important, statistics demonstrate that dependent economies during the period of monopolistic imperialist expansion are *exporting* capital to the dominant economies.

As a reaction against that process, some dependent countries have tried to limit exportable profits. Nevertheless, international corporations had the foresight to sense that the principal way to send returns abroad is through the payment of licenses, patents, royalties and related items. These institutional devices, together with the increasing indebtedness of the exploited nations vis-a-vis international agencies and banks (in fact controlled by the big imperialist countries), have altered the main forms of exploitation.

It is not the purpose of this presentation to discuss all the consequences of this for a monopoly capitalist economy. However, some repercussions of the new pattern of imperialism on the us and other central economies are obvious. If a real problem of capital realization exists under monopoly capitalism, the new form of dependency will increase the necessity to find new fields of application for the capital accumulated in the metropolitan economies. Witness the push toward more 'technical obsolescence' administered by corporations. Military expenditures are another means of finding new outlets for capital.

Nevertheless, I am not considering the whole picture. In fact, some of these conclusions might change if the capital flows and trade interrelations among advanced capitalist economies were taken into consideration. Thus the preceding remarks are presented with the single

TABLE III
Sources of Investment

AREAS AND SECTORS	1957/1959			1960/1962			1963/1965			1957/1965		
	Source of Investment			Source of Investment			Source of Investment			Source of Investment		
	IF	LF	USF	IF	LF	USF	IF	LF	USF	IF	LF	USF
<i>All Areas</i>												
Total	0,52	0,22	0,26	0,57	0,24	0,19	0,48	0,32	0,20	0,52	0,27	0,21
Mining	0,46	0,13	0,41	0,63	0,20	0,17	0,68	0,26	0,06	0,60	0,20	0,20
Oil	0,48	0,23	0,29	0,61	0,15	0,24	0,43	0,29	0,28	0,50	0,23	0,27
Manufg.	0,57	0,24	0,19	0,53	0,30	0,17	0,49	0,35	0,16	0,51	0,32	0,17
<i>Canada</i>												
Total	0,57	1,13	0,30	0,70	0,12	0,18	0,64	0,22	0,14	0,64	0,17	0,19
Mining	0,40	0,20	0,40	0,52	0,14	0,34	0,75	0,23	0,02	0,58	0,19	0,23
Oil	0,42	0,24	0,34	0,66	0,11	0,23	0,58	0,18	0,24	0,55	0,18	0,27
Manufg.	0,77	0,01	0,22	0,81	0,11	0,08	0,63	0,24	0,13	0,71	0,15	0,14
<i>Latin America</i>												
Total	0,50	0,17	0,33	0,71	0,23	0,06	0,60	0,31	0,09	0,59	0,24	0,17
Mining	0,46	0,01	0,43	1,08	0,26	-0,34	1,04	0,13	-0,17	0,78	0,14	0,08
Oil	0,57	0,09	0,34	1,06	0,01	0,07	0,96	0,14	-0,10	0,79	0,08	0,13
Manufg.	0,36	0,40	0,24	0,38	0,40	0,22	0,38	0,40	0,22	0,38	0,40	0,22
<i>Europe</i>												
Total	0,44	0,37	0,19	0,42	0,30	0,28	0,40	0,38	0,22	0,41	0,35	0,22
Mining	—	-0,50	0,50	1,25	-0,50	0,25	0,32	0,23	0,45	0,44	0,04	0,52
Oil	0,30	0,44	0,26	0,33	0,18	0,49	0,22	0,40	0,38	0,27	0,35	0,38
Manufg.	0,52	0,33	0,15	0,46	0,35	0,19	0,47	0,37	0,16	0,48	0,36	0,16
<i>Other Areas</i>												
Total	0,58	0,23	0,19	0,51	0,29	0,20	0,38	0,35	0,27	0,46	0,23	0,23
Mining	0,82	-0,18	0,36	0,48	0,30	0,22	0,29	0,41	0,30	0,40	0,31	0,29
Oil	0,57	0,23	0,20	0,55	0,24	0,21	0,36	0,28	0,36	0,47	0,26	0,27
Manufg.	0,56	0,29	0,15	0,43	0,39	0,18	0,42	0,42	0,16	0,44	0,39	0,17

IF = Internal Funds (Reinvestment of profits and depreciation funds)

LF = Local Funds, or funds coming from third countries

USF = Funds coming from the United States

SOURCE: *Survey of Current Business*, several issues, analysed by ECLA

In F. Fajnzylber, op. cit., p. 65

aim of stressing that the present trend of capital export from the underdeveloped countries to the imperialist ones leads to a redefinition of the function of foreign expansion for capital realization.

The idea that the growth of capitalism depends on Third World exploitation requires some further elaboration. In fact, the main trends of the last decade show that Latin American participation in both the expansion of international trade and investment is decreasing. If we accept the distinction between two sectors of international trade—the Centre and the Periphery—one finds that the trade rate of growth was 7.9 per cent per year in the central economies and 4.8 per cent in the peripheral ones. As a consequence, exports of the peripheral economies which reached a peak in 1948 (32 per cent of the international trade) decreased to 26 per cent in 1958 and to 21 per cent in 1968 (below the 28 per cent of the pre-war period). In the Latin American case this participation decreased from 12 per cent in 1948 to 6 per cent in 1968.⁴ The same is happening with respect to the importance that the

⁴ These data and analyses can be found in Anibal Pinto and Jan Kregel's interesting paper 'El sistema centro-periferia 20 años después', ECLA, 3rd version, II-II-71, pp. 14 and following.

periphery has for us investments. The periphery absorbed 55 per cent of the total us direct investment in 1950 and only 40 per cent in 1968. Latin American participation in this process fell in the same period from 39 per cent to 20 per cent.

Of course, these data do not show the increase of 'loans and aid' which—as was stressed before—has been of increasing importance in economic imperialism. However, the fact that the interrelations among the most advanced economies are growing cannot be utilized as an argument to infer the 'end of imperialism'. On the contrary, the more appropriate inference is that the relations between advanced capitalist countries and dependent nations lead rather to a 'marginalization' of the latter within the global system of economic development (as Anibal Pinto has outlined).⁵

Some Political Consequences

The new forms of dependency will undoubtedly give rise to novel political and social adaptations and reactions inside the dependent countries. If my analysis is correct, the above mentioned process of fragmentation of interests will probably lead to an internal differentiation that in very schematic terms can be suggested as follows. Part of the 'national bourgeoisie', (the principal one in terms of economic power—agrarian, commercial, industrial or financial) is the direct beneficiary, as a junior partner, of the foreign interest. I refer not only to the direct associates, but also to economic groups that benefit from the eventual atmosphere of prosperity derived from dependent development (as is easily demonstrated in Brazil or Mexico). The process goes further and not only part of the 'middle-class' (intellectuals, state bureaucracies, armies, etc.) are involved in the new system, but even part of the working class. Those employed by the 'internationalized' sector structurally belong to it.

Of course, structural dependence does not mean immediate political co-option. Effective political integration of groups and persons depends on the political processes, movements, goals and alternatives that they face.

Nevertheless, as the process of internationalization of dependent nations progresses, it becomes difficult to perceive the political process in terms of a struggle between the Nation and the anti-Nation, the latter conceived as the Foreign Power of Imperialism. The anti-Nation will be inside the 'Nation'—so to speak, among the local people in different social strata. Furthermore, to perceive that, in these terms, the Nation is an occupied one, is not an easy process: there are very few 'others' in cultural and national terms physically representing the presence of 'the enemy'.

I do not wish to give the impression that I conceive the political process in a mechanistic way. Consequently, my intention is not to 'derive' some

⁵ A comprehensive and pioneer analysis on new forms of imperialism can be found in J. O'Connor, 'The Meaning of Economic Imperialism', Radical Education Project, Detroit. See also H. Alavi, 'Imperialism, Old and New', *Socialist Register* 1964.

political consequences from a structural economic analysis. Rather, the point is that most socialist interpretations of the Latin American political situation not only run in that direction but also assume the wrong structural point of departure.

Some more general remarks can be summarized thus:

a) Analysis which is based on the naive assumption that imperialism unifies the interests and reactions of dominated nations is a clear oversimplification of what is really occurring. It does not take into consideration the internal fragmentation of these countries and the attraction that development exerts in different social strata, and not only on the upper-classes.

b) The term 'development of underdevelopment' (in A. G. Frank) summarizes another mistake. In fact, the assumption of a structural 'lack of dynamism' in dependent economies because of imperialism misinterprets the actual forms of economic imperialism and presents an imprecise political understanding of the situation. It is necessary to understand that in specific situations it is possible to expect *development* and *dependency*.

It would be wrong to generalize these processes to the entire Third World. They only occur when corporations reorganize the international division of labour and include parts of dependent economies in their plans of productive investment.

Thus the majority of the Third World is not necessarily involved in this specific structural situation. To assume the contrary will lead to political mistakes equivalent to those derived from, for instance, Debray's analysis of Latin America. Debray once accepted the view that imperialism homogenized all Latin American countries (with one or two exceptions) and assumed a frame of reference which stressed the old fashioned type of imperialist exploitation with its attendant reinforcement of oligarchic and landlord-based types of dominance.

Now, I am assuming that there are different forms of dependency in Latin America and that in some of them, development produces a shift in internal power, displacing the old oligarchical power groups and reinforcing more 'modern' types of political control. In that sense, the present dictatorships in Latin America, even when militarily based, do not express, by virtue of pure structural constraints, a traditional and 'anti-developmental' (I mean anti-modern capitalism) form of domination.

It is hardly necessary to repeat that from the left's point of view there are strong arguments to maintain its denunciation of both new forms of imperialism or dependency and political authoritarianism. But clearly, new political analyses are needed to explain the bureaucratic-technocratic form of authoritarian state which serves the interests of the internationalized bourgeoisie and their allies.

In this context, and in order to avoid a mechanistic approach, a correct

orientation of the struggles against capitalist imperialism demands special attention to cultural problems and the different forms of alienation.

If the capitalist pattern of development in industrialized dependent countries pushes toward internal fragmentation and inequalities, values related to national integrity and social participation might be transformed into instruments of political struggle. To permit the State and bourgeois groups to command the banner of nationalism—conceived not only in terms of sovereignty but also of internal cohesion and progressive social integration—would be a mistake with deep consequences. I am not supproting the idea that the strategic (or revolutionary) side of dependent industrialized societies is the 'marginalized sector'. But denunciation of marginalization as a consequence of capitalist growth, and the organization of unstructured masses, are indispensable tasks of analysis and practical politics.

✓ For this reason it is not very realistic to expect the national bourgeoisie to lead resistance against external penetration. Consequently, denunciation of the dependency perspective cannot rest on values associated with bourgeois nationalism. National integrity as cited above means primarily popular integration in the nation and the need to struggle against the particular form of development promoted by the large corporations.

In the same way that trade unionism may become a danger for workers in advanced capitalist societies, development is a real ideological pole of attraction for middle class and workers' sectors in Latin American countries. The answer to that attractive effect cannot be a purely ideological denial of economic progress, when it occurs. A reply must be based on values and political objectives that enlarge the awareness of the masses with respect to social inequalities and national dependency.

review

Appeasement's Epigones

A declaration of intent by Franklin Reid Gannon, (author of *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*)¹ reads, 'It is one of the great ironies of the period, and perhaps the major conclusion of this study, that appeasement was in fact the product of a crisis of the liberal conscience. So much print—and newsprint—has been devoted to painting the distinction between the far-sighted Liberals of the Left who understood the real nature of the Nazi menace from the very beginning, and the reactionary conservatives of the Right who welcomed Hitler not only for himself alone but also for the check he promised to deliver to Bolshevik Russia. This view, though previously assaulted, has not yet been laid low; it is hoped that this study will contribute to its timely demise.'

To 'lay low' a 'view' may seem a quixotic undertaking. We may assume the writer to mean simply that he hopes to change an opinion. He is not alone with his hopes. The opinion he refers to has indeed been 'previously assaulted'. By those who saw it as damaging to themselves, it was assaulted from the moment when appeasement ended in war. The assault was a *sortie* in defence of their reputations by and on behalf of political leaders struggling to maintain power and credibility. Their motives were simple and compelling. The assaults never quite ceased. They were often undertaken in the obituaries, inevitably frequent as the fifties and sixties passed, of those most involved during the thirties in making policies of which the results, seen in September 1939, were generally assessed as undesirable. These posthumous exercises were sporadic and sometimes apologetic in tone—the deceased had acted without positively evil intent; the aims of his policy had been less ignoble than its consequences had led the vulgar, the superficial and the uninformed to suppose; he had been frustrated by world forces beyond his control (Mod. version of Old Eng. term 'God').

As historiographic counsel strove to apportion and re-apportion blame for the crack-up, students sympathized with the summing up of the magistrate in the court action following a multiple car-smash: All the concerned had been experienced drivers and cold sober; the lethal

¹ F. R. Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, OUP, £3.25

accident had occurred when all the vehicles were on their proper side of the road, and stationary.

More recently, at a point somewhere not precisely discernible along the line of the last three or four years, assaults, of the type welcomed by Gannon, began to be resumed with new vigour. Gannon's own book has served as one of the rallying points. Many articles and lectures have been deployed around it. In the May issue of *Encounter*, 'the recent publication by the Clarendon Press of Mr Frank Gannon's thesis' was seen as an encouraging reinforcement of the Cause by D. C. Watt Reader in International History in the University of London at the outset of a long and contentious, though poorly researched article on one element of the same general theme.

Guilty Men

'The Cause?' What Cause? What are these layers low of, these contributors to the timely demise of, views actually on about? As just said, the people in charge of the car at the moment of the collision had clear and cogent reason for disclaiming responsibility, sharing out the blame between others on the road, and their own pesky back-seat drivers; Churchillians, anti-fascist liberals, bawling marxist pamphleteers, and a horde of enfranchized citizens who, unless the war went on for ever, would one day have a chance to get to the polls and record a verdict in accordance with the evidence. Neville Chamberlain wanted to remain Prime Minister, and did so. Lord Halifax, Samuel Hoare, and John Simon all wanted to remain in office, and did so, at least until the next pile-up in May 1940. Above all the Conservative Party could not afford to shrug off, without attempted rebuttal, the charges stridently uttered in such widely popular publications as *Guilty Men*, and impudently supported by quotations from their own public statements.

Not quite so clear, though, it seems, equally cogent, are the reasons for the current effort to re-open and re-state the case. *Cui bono?* What motivates this campaign; what causes the minds of these historiographers to leap so alike? And it is to be remarked that some of them write with a kind of nervously defensive anxiety, a shrill urgency ordinarily found in pamphleteering around some immediate political enterprise of great pith and moment.

It is easy, though not for that reason pointless or unnecessary, to relate this phenomenon to what is loosely but intelligibly described as the Right Backlash seen in action at very numerous points of the political and cultural scene during the three or four above-mentioned years. Signs of it were, of course, obvious in the birth and flamboyant infancy of the Heath administration. Everyone could see them, too, in the rise of Mary Whitehouse and all that that implied. By no accident, the paranoia of the Whitehouse adherents regarding Leftish influences supposedly permeating the BBC is to be observed in some of the itchy complaints from those who feel that to re-adjust the image of the Right in the thirties is an essential of Right propaganda in the seventies. Before the Nazis came to power, their propagandists understood how

rewarding it was to demonstrate, in the teeth of all the evidence to the contrary, that the Left had stealthily captured all the commanding heights of the media, including the history books. It is thought worthwhile to try to persuade people that in Britain is dominated by Reds. So why should not D. C. Watt, in *Encounter* refer to 'that residual legacy of Victor Gollancz' Left Book Club, Penguin Books'?

Varying in other particulars and emphases, those engaged in the big re-write job on the thirties, are agreed on one basic axiom: It is dangerous and subversive of desirable opinion, for the student to leave the lecture room with the impression that considerations of class interest were or could have been dominant factors in the policy-making of the British ruling class during the period under discussion. Watt writes with disgust of 'the standard interpretation put on the events of the time by the displaced intellectuals of Europe and America of the day'—these ugly customers played a big role in Nazi literature too—'that a single socio-civil conflict of dimensions at least as large as those of Europe and America was in progress, between the forces of stupid reactionary repressive, elitist, business, clerical and aristocratic authoritarianism, and the new progressive, efficient anti-capitalist intellectual and working-class democracy'. (The use of 'intellectual' as a pejorative term is also symptomatic and reminiscent. No matter that it is here used by a University Reader. Who better placed to spy out and denounce intellectuals, particularly anti-capitalist ones?)

Anti-semitic Hallucinations

It has, I suppose, to be explained here that what the Watt article is specifically in aid of is an attack upon the behaviour, in the thirties of my newsletter *The Week*. Watt, and some others of his school, credit *The Week* with an international influence greater than even I have ever claimed for it; and I have never been reticent in the matter. Ribbentrop when he was Hitler's Ambassador in London, had similar hallucinations. He demanded that the Foreign Office get it suppressed, declaring it to be the main source of all anti-Nazi propaganda in Britain and the United States. But then he believed, too, that I was of east European Jewish origin, 'Cockburn' being a clumsily deceptive translation of my real name, Hannbrand. Among the re-write men, *The Week* keeps on turning up as a kind of epitome of that view they are trying to lay low.

Gannon is equally anxious to dissipate the notion that class interest was dominant in British Governmental attitudes to Germany and, above all, the Soviet Union. He clearly understands that this is a basic essential for his whole thesis. He also has to assume the non-existence of the Cliveden Set, though even David Astor has written that he could never make up his mind whether *The Week* 'invented' the Cliveden Set or 'discovered it.'

Gannon writes: "The basis of the fictional "Cliveden Set", invented by Claud Cockburn in his newsletter *The Week*, was that it was a plutocratic conspiracy based upon property interests which prompted giving Hitler a free hand in the east so as to secure the west against his encroachment . . . Not only *The Week* and the popular Left-wing papers,

but even the *Manchester Guardian* occasionally slipped into this kind of marxist analysis. A leading article in March 1938 placed blame for the Anschluss on the shoulders of the upper classes who had been moved from the traditional defence of British interests, "for a new and blinding fear has come upon them, destroying their judgment and paralyzing their will. This is the fear of Communism . . . in this case the fear of Communism has reconciled the English upper classes to the prospect of the complete loss of British power in the world, for Hitler and Mussolini stand in their eyes for the defence of property. . . Men who will not protect British interests against the dictators are in no mood to protect the liberty of Europe. Indeed the sympathies that draw them to Hitler and Mussolini determine their whole conception of policy. Somebody, they argue, must give order and stability to Europe, and who will do it better than these strong men with their hatred of Communism?"

To describe this as 'Marxist analysis' is, to say the least, slapdash. No marxist supposed that the British upper classes were reconciled to the loss of British power in the world, or united in a decision to sacrifice those interests for the sake of opposing Communism. The growth of Conservative opposition to Chamberlain's policy in the late thirties demonstrated the existing disunity. Any marxist analysis of the situation at the time, suggested that inter-imperialist war was at least as probable as all-imperialist anti-Soviet war. Not marxists only, but the strategists of British finance-imperialism too, could easily envisage a moment when policies directed against Communism could become counter-productive in their effects upon essential, indispensable British capitalist interests. The optimum policy was to postpone that clash to the unforeseeable future; to maintain a situation in which imperialism and anti-communism did not oppose but complemented one another the way the textbooks said they should. Collaboration with Nazi imperialism was seen as the best means of realizing that optimum policy. It failed; but it was not nonsensical. Nonsensical are only the current attempts to pretend that the leaders of the British ruling class were too stupid to attempt its realization.

The Cliveden Set

The importance of the Cliveden Set in the affair was principally that its members—notably Lady Astor, Lords Lothian, Londonderry and Halifax, and Dawson, Editor of *The Times*—symbolized, personified and often vocalized the thinking of the most optimistic among the powerful; those who supposed that mutually profitable Anglo-German imperialist anti-communist bloc could be constructed more easily than proved to be the case. It is legitimate to conclude, as does Keith Middlemas in his new book *Diplomacy of Illusion*²—an informed, deeply researched, and often very illuminating study of the workings of the Chamberlain Government—that the degree of influence decisively exerted by the Cliveden Set is 'not proven'. And indeed there are many documents now available to suggest that the Government was pursuing policies associated at the time with Cliveden, without in fact requiring any pushful advice from the Cliveden Set.

² Keith Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £4.75.

Symptomatic of the curious paranoia of the re-write men, is their anxiety to deny that the principal Conservative leaders saw the eastward expansion of Nazi imperialism as a desirable aim of diplomacy. So many of them avowed it so often, and there were so many arguments that could be advanced in favour of it, that to start now to deny the existence of such an aim appears frenetic. It was stated simply enough by Prime Minister Baldwin to Winston Churchill on 29 July 1936: 'If there is any fighting to be done, I should like to see the Bolsheviks and the Nazis doing it.' Hitler's determination to expand German domination to the east and southeast, to Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine had been placarded over and over again: it was one of the best-advertised facts of international diplomacy. In the official *Documents on German Foreign Policy* appears an account of a discussion in August 1938 between Kordt, German Chargé d'Affaires in London, and Sir Horace Wilson, closest and most constant adviser and mouth-piece of Premier Chamberlain. The account of this meeting between the representatives of the Anglo-German Master Races brightly illuminates the true creed, pre-occupations and objectives of the British Government. Wilson is summarized as stating: 'Britain and Germany were in fact the two countries in which the greatest order reigned and which were the best governed. Both were built on the national principle . . . the only working principle of human relationship. The reverse of this, Bolshevism meant anarchy and barbarism. It would be the height of folly if these two leading white races were to exterminate each other in war. Bolshevism would be the only gainer thereby . . . A constructive solution of the Czech question by peaceful means would pave the way for Germany to exercise large-scale policy in the South-East . . . neither had Britain any intention of opposing a development of Germany's economy in a south-easterly direction. Her only wish was that she should not be debarred from trade there.'

Europe's Scotland Yard

The required strategy of international class war did not, as is sometimes made to appear, operate solely in relation to the Soviet Union. Britain was the Scotland Yard of Europe, the headquarters of counter-insurgency. At the very outset of the Spanish War the British Government had shown its absolute determination to encompass the defeat of the Spanish Republic: on 7 August 1936, the British Ambassador in Paris informed the French Government that if France did not ban all transport of war material to the Republic, and if Germany then attacked France, Britain would repudiate the Treaty of Locarno and give Germany a free hand. Its subsequent policy in Spain, supported at the outset by both the Churchillians and the Labour Party, was entirely consistent with the line of that ultimatum.

It was a consistent part, too, of its policy in eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia had been created at Versailles as the intended strongpoint of the *cordon sanitaire* against Communism: it enjoyed the favour of Britain as a threat to potential revolutionary movements in Germany and Austria. After 1935, when it linked itself militarily with the Soviet Union, it became increasingly desirable for the British Government to collaborate with Hitler in its dismemberment. Throughout

1938 the British exerted increasingly brutal pressures in Prague to secure the transfer to Germany of its powerful strategic defence lines, and—this was equally indispensable—repudiation of its pacts with the Soviet Union. These pressures were successful partly by the threat to abandon Czechoslovakia to German attack. But they would have failed if the British had not mobilized against Benes and, in particular Sirovy, the powerful forces within and around the Government which, representing large sectors of the Czech bourgeoisie, preferred surrender to the threat of bolshevization. They envisaged a happier future in a German-dominated Common Market of south-east Europe and the Ukraine, in which, as Horace Wilson suggested, British capitalism would be permitted to participate. As a capitalist project, this, too, was not at all nonsensical.

Munich

There was, naturally, a close intermeshing of the Chamberlain Government's domestic economic policies with its activities as overseer of capitalist law and order in Europe. Middlemas' book is particularly valuable for the light it throws on the way in which British re-armament—for the sake of which Chamberlain was supposed to have 'gained valuable time' at Munich—was bedevilled and strangled by the Government's insistence that nothing must be done to produce more than a minimal disturbance of the profitable operations of private enterprise in industry and commerce. The value of the pound sterling and the international profits of the City of London must be protected at all costs. It would make no sense to save capitalism in Europe while interfering with capitalists at home.

Short cogitation on these matters goes a long way to explaining why the Right, in the seventies, feels so urgent a need to obfuscate them. To declare, as Gannon does, that 'appeasement was in fact the product of a crisis of the liberal conscience' is a wild but characteristic exercise in mystification. That the 'liberal conscience' did suffer twinges so sharp as to deserve the description 'crisis', nobody doubts. Still, it may be useful to examine them as displayed in the newspapers of the period studied by Gannon. He recalls, and demonstrates at length, the workings of such factors as the remembered horrors of the First World War, the disillusionment produced by its results, the typically liberal notion that because the new German Republic had been savaged by the victors at Versailles, even Hitler had a moral right to insist on acts of contrition in which the sore places would be fraternally kissed and made well. It is easy, even possibly useful, for him to note that the Labour and ostensibly anti-fascist press repeatedly showed an eagerness to accommodate Hitler and to discommode the Communists, which in effect gave aid and comfort to the Government.

There would indeed have been witnessed a truly remarkable social phenomenon had the British bourgeoisie, the leaders of the social-democrats and other pillars of the British capitalist system not suffered some moral discomfort as they tried to adjust their consciences, their liberalism, their decorous but indispensable 'progressivism' to the facts of the situation. The latest official documents, such as those researched

by Middlemas, indicate that Chamberlain had at least a clear idea of what he was up to, and was not much afflicted by crises of conscience. Paradoxically, those now so anxious to protect him from the terrors of marxist analysis are often forced to represent him as a muddle-headed blunderer—'possessed of typically British pragmatism' is the preferred reading here. Watt even gets down to invoking on Chamberlain's behalf 'the residual morality of his Nonconformist forebears'.

It is easily intelligible that those busy re-writing history in the Right interest, should seek to present the leaders of the Right in the thirties as, at the worst, well-intentioned miscalculators and to prove, on the evidence of that liberal conscience in crisis, that if there was guilt, then everyone was guilty: so that in effect no one was. Of immediate interest is the question how far they will be allowed by serious students to succeed in their frantic enterprise.

Claude Cockburn

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communication

Dear Comrades,

I have just received the no. 72 issue of your magazine, which contains an article by Gísli Gunnarsson, 'The New Regime in Iceland'. Since it seems to me that this article gives a somewhat simplified picture of the situation in Iceland, I should like to make the following observations.

1. On the most fundamental question—i.e. that the advent of the new government is objectively a positive development, but that it does not in itself constitute a step in the direction of socialism—I agree with the author. However, the positive results that can be expected of it are not limited to an 'ideological and political clarification'; it might also create a situation objectively more favourable to the struggle for socialism. In this context, the extension of the fishing limit is of crucial importance. Gunnarsson disposes of this measure by saying that it is fully backed by the bourgeoisie. It is true that the right-wing parties verbally support the government in this matter, but during the 12 years of Conservative government absolutely nothing was done to extend the fishing limit, and the claims of the opposition were denounced as irresponsible and adventurist. The point is that this measure, even if there is nothing anti-capitalist about it, runs counter to the strategy adopted by the Icelandic bourgeoisie: subordination of all economic policies to the goal of attracting of foreign capital and systematic neglect of fishing and fishing industry. On the other hand, control over the fishing grounds around Iceland is an essential prerequisite for a future socialist transformation of the Icelandic economy; and it is important to establish this control as soon as possible in order to prevent a destructive exploitation by foreign trawler-fleets.

Of course, the importance of this problem does not justify a reformist general line—a socialist revolution is the only global alternative to the comprador-capitalist strategy. But if a reformist government shows itself capable of solving it, this must certainly influence the attitude revolutionary socialists adopt towards it.

2. Gunnarsson's pessimism regarding the question of the US base is probably justified. However, it should be emphasized that the government is in this respect less homogenous than his description implies. Recently, the majority of the government decided to accept an offer by the US government to finance an extension of the Keflavík airport. The ministers of the People's Alliance publicly opposed this decision and condemned it as incompatible with the avowed policy of the govern-

ment. At the time when this letter is written, it remains to be seen how the government will react to the new American escalation in Vietnam.

3. I think the People's Alliance deserves a more positive appraisal than it gets in Gunnarsson's article. It has carried the process of destalinization much farther than any of the CP's in Western Europe, and there has so far been no sign of the 'normalization' to which these are progressively succumbing (there have not been any contacts on party level with the Soviet Union since 1968). Also, intra-party bureaucratization is very limited. It is of course true that the present policy of the party is purely reformist, but compared with Social-Democratic or neo-Stalinist parties it is at the same time more sensitive to influences from the New Left (which so far has not created any independent political organization in Iceland). The possibility of a turn to the left in the party's policy should therefore, in my view, not be underrated; but only a sharpening of the class struggle in Iceland would permit a more concrete appraisal.

4. In this article, there is an error which must be due to a misprint: the Brezhnevites did not get 7 per cent of the votes in the municipal elections in Reykjavík, but about 1 per cent. 7 per cent would have been a success—at least enough to save the Soviet ambassador.

Cordially yours

Jóhann P. Árnason

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THE LEFT AGAINST EUROPE?

Tom Nairn

'To be in favour of Europe . . . does not imply
surrender to or alliance with the left's enemies.

It means exactly the opposite. It signifies
recognising and meeting them as enemies for what
they are, upon the terrain of reality and the future.'

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The past year has seen a dramatic rise in the intensity of the British class struggle. The most militant tactics have been taken up on a mass scale for the first time in the history of British trade unions; factory occupations, flying mass pickets are now accepted by millions of workers as real improvements on the customary tactics of industrial stoppage. A string of important defeats has been inflicted on the Conservative Government: the Clydeside work-in induced the Government to abandon its 'lame duck' policy of scrapping unprofitable industries whatever the consequences for the workers involved; the miners strike not only smashed the norm for wage increases but demonstrated the potency of rank and file initiative and the potential of solidarity between different groups of workers in the most momentous confrontation between the working class and the bourgeois state that has been seen in Britain for nearly half a century; finally the mobilisation against the imprisonment of the five dockers forced the Government to devise an ignominious violation of its own law.

Yet despite this the Conservative Government still retains the political initiative. It knows where it is going and is prepared to allow even major tactical setbacks on other fronts in order to get there. The destination in question is quite simply the European Economic Community. The number one strategic priority in both home and foreign affairs is to take British capitalism into Europe.

Tom Nairn argues, in the major study to which we devote this entire issue of the Review, that British entry to the EEC was as much part of a political as of an economic strategy. It is not only designed to restore the flagging fortunes of British capital but also to reassert in a new form the political hegemony of the ruling class. For this effect to be achieved it was essential that the Labour Party and the forces to its left should play their part in the limp charade of the debate about Europe. Instead of seeking to

give political expression to the explosion of proletarian militancy the energies of the greater part of the left both inside and outside the Labour Party were consumed in a social patriotic crusade to defend the sovereignty of the Great British nation state against the Brussels bureaucrats.

The hackneyed themes of British nationalism so unceremoniously discarded by the major party of the ruling class were enthusiastically taken up by its subaltern political formation, the Labour Party. The left of the Labour Party has ever since proved itself particularly zealous in striving to keep the anti-Market campaign alive and seems set upon converting it into a campaign to take Britain out of the EEC. It is determined not to be deprived of such a providential distraction from the painful choices of the real class struggle raging outside the conventicles of the Labour Party.

Not only the Labour Party but also that large part of the left which regards Labourism as an important and necessary step on the British road to socialism, welcomed the campaign against the Market as an invaluable opportunity for arranging a legitimate marriage between the Labour movement and the potent forces of popular nationalism. A working class which in great defensive struggles can turn on their head the solemnly announced intentions of Her Majesty's Government and can summarily dispose of the ancient mystique of the rule of law is evidently capable of a loftier political ambition than that of picking the Union Jack out of the gutter. Beyond isolated and temporary breaches of the wage norm should lie the struggle for the abolition of the wages system; beyond isolated and temporary violations of the rule of law should lie the struggle to establish the rule of labour.

The perilous consequences of encouraging national labourist frenzy, on the other hand, became unmistakably clear in the Labour Party's capitulation to the racist hysteria surrounding the arrival of the Uganda Asians. Its craven response on this question was an ominous index of exactly what types of political corruption we should expect from a Labour Party dominated by the anti-Market 'left'.

The issues raised by the present political conjuncture in Britain and the bearing of Britain's entry to the EEC upon them are both complex and difficult. Tom Nairn's study is undoubtedly a strikingly original and coherent attempt to confront them. Too many on the revolutionary left in Britain, uneasily aware of the chauvinist implications of the anti-Market campaign, have hoped that the whole problem would recede into history

and allow them to again concern themselves with the familiar, reassuring preoccupations of the economic class struggle. In an extended critique of the positions adopted by the Marxist left on Europe Tom Nairn insists on the vital connection between the class struggle properly conceived and the question of British entry. He argues this negatively by indicating the dangers of endorsing national labourism and positively by arguing that entry will prepare the terrain for more advantageous class confrontations than those that occur within the old nation state framework.

Underlying Tom Nairn's examination of the particular conjuncture of 1971-2 is a general thesis about the significance of nationalism in the advanced imperialist states: the development of capitalism in Europe is leaving behind the political form of the nation state with its accompanying ideology and is creating a situation in which proletarian internationalism—defined, of course, by no means exclusively in European terms—can and must become an integral part of the class struggle in a new and immediate sense. To ignore this development is not merely to become the prisoner of the most backward and reactionary bourgeois traditions but is also to miss the tremendous opportunities which capitalist development opens up for the revolutionary movement. The emergence of the multi-national state is an even more momentous occurrence than the rise of the multi-national corporation. Of course the prospects for a parliamentary road to socialism in the multi-national state is even more self-evidently absurd than it has been in the past. It is thus quite appropriate that methods for dealing with political 'terrorism' should figure so prominently on the agenda of the first meeting of the enlarged Council of Ministers. But if European capital intends to fortify its apparatus of coercion it has to do so with a sparser political-ideological armoury. Seen in this light the question of British membership of the EEC ceases to be either an isolated 'issue' which does not pose problems of a general theoretical-political nature, or a simple distraction from the eternal verities of abstract Marxism.

Since Tom Nairn's argument goes so much against the grain of received thinking on the Marxist left and yet deals with questions which the latter usually evades or confuses, we have decided to give it all the space available in this issue. We hope in doing so to open in a new way a controversy that has been muffled and sidetracked for too long.

The Migration of Workers in the United Kingdom and the European Community

W. R. BÖHNING

Freedom of movement for workers is a fundamental tenet of the European Economic Community. This book describes the historical development, the present state, and the future plans of the Community in regard both to the legal framework and actual migratory movements. The experience of the Six, and of Britain and Switzerland, is analysed, and the likely size, composition, and direction of future cross-Channel migration are shown to run counter to popular expectation. 29 tables £3 *Institute of Race Relations*

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STEPHEN CASTLES and GODULA KOSACK

Since 1945 all the major countries of Western Europe have experienced large-scale immigration from southern Europe or from former colonies. In this comprehensive survey of data, the authors analyse the effects of such immigration on wages and economic growth and conclude that migrant labour is an important economic and political stabilizing factor in contemporary Western Europe. Tables £5 *Institute of Race Relations*

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The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony 1921-1933

JEREMY NOAKES

Although the Nazi Party originated in Bavaria, after 1925 its main centres of support tended to be the Protestant and rural areas of north Germany. Lower Saxony was one such region in which Nazi support was unusually strong. This book traces the growth of the party there from a fringe group to a mass movement with a large and complex organization. 3 maps £4 *Oxford Historical Monographs*

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ALAN ANGELL

The author outlines the historical traditions of Chilean labour, the size and structure of the movement, and its role in the industrial relations system, and examines the activities of the political parties in the trade unions. 18 tables 1 map £5 *Royal Institute of International Affairs*

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Tom Nairn

The European Problem

'I imagine that by about the turn of the century something like a United States of Socialist Europe will exist. A timid and conservative prefiguration of these United States is naturally the Common Market, for even conservative, bourgeois politicians are beginning to sense that the nation state, at least in Europe . . . has become an anachronism.'

Isaac Deutscher, interview,
New Left Review No. 47 (Jan-Feb 1968).

The following pages are mainly devoted to a study of how the British left struggled to come to terms with the Common Market, in the course of what was known (with a touch of derision) as the 'great debate' of 1971. But it should not be thought that either the problem, the left's reactions and answers, or the conclusions to be drawn from the whole episode are peculiar to Great Britain. In this sense, all that happened was that Britain had to face consciously and deal more rapidly with a dilemma which—by contrast—had 'dawned' much more gradually upon the political life of the six original member-states.

And this very acceleration of events created a conscious 'problem' and underlined the nature of the dilemma. In the later 1950s—it should be recalled—at the time of the Common Market's formation, the combined pressures of Stalinism and the Cold War made it all too easy to avoid such difficult questions with stereotyped answers.

In the early 1970s, however, the British left is grappling with the difficulty at the very moment in which its character—that is, its character as a European problem—is becoming more evident everywhere. Those who doubt this should turn to Giorgio Amendola's recent statement of the Italian Communist Party's position on Europe, *I comunisti e l'Europa*, where it is maintained that 'international integration is a reality with which one will have to come to terms', and that the left can only respond adequately to this process by quickly transcending its 'narrow national limits'. Or (perhaps still more significant, given its notoriously conservative source) the French Communist position outlined at practically the same time by J. Denis and J. Kanapa in *Pour ou contre l'Europe?*

These are theoretical indications of the way the wind is blowing. But of course practical politics too have imparted lessons in the same sense. The 'great debate', it is argued below, demonstrated how a ruling class can obtain its class aims by moving on to the 'European' terrain and simultaneously forcing (or perhaps simply allowing) the left to retreat back to the lost ground of nationalism and 'national sovereignty'. Hardly six months after the provisional conclusion of the British debate, with the parliamentary vote of 28 October 1971, the French government attempted a closely analogous move with President Pompidou's 'European' referendum of April 1972. This was, in the event, far less successful than the Heath government's campaign. Pompidou proved that he was not de Gaulle, and could not aspire to use the referendum technique in the classical fashion. Nevertheless (as many commentators pointed out) his strategy by no means met the humiliating *débat* which it deserved, for the PCF still let itself be manoeuvred into the position of voting 'No' rather than abstaining. Gaullism avoided a moral *débâcle* and could claim a formal victory and pursue its chosen course of government. Fifteen years after the Treaty of Rome, in the country which had always been the heart of the Common Market, a bourgeois régime could still count on the great party of the left remaining within its 'narrow national limits'.

Both theoretically and practically, therefore, the British debate about entry should be seen as posing a problem (though admittedly in an 'extreme' context with many peculiarities of its own) that has some validity for the Common Market as a whole. There is all too little space to pursue the theoretical implications of this problem here. But it should be noted that these concern both the history of marxist ideas about nationalism and internationalism and (perhaps more important) the real historical relationship between marxism and the nationalism which has characterized European history during the century now ending. The Common Market has begun, at least, to awaken marxism from its dogmatic slumbers in this vital area of thought.

I Britain and Europe: The New National Question

'The nation-state decays and disintegrates whether people are aware of it or not, no matter what their efforts to preserve it . . . The nation-states of the West have left their golden age far, very far, behind . . . Like any organism that has outlived its day, the nation-state can prolong its existence only by intensifying all the processes of its own degeneration'.

Isaac Deutscher *The Non-Jewish Jew* pp. 113-4.

In 1971 the British left was forced to define its position towards Europe in one short period of time. Although the question of British entry to the Common Market had dragged on intermittently for more than ten years, it was finally resolved in less than six months, between May and October 1971. In May—as *The Times* put it—suddenly everyone began to believe in entry. The meeting between Pompidou and Heath on 20-21 May demonstrated a dramatic change in the French position on Britain's application for entry: it became virtually certain that the latter would succeed. Five months and a few days later, the House of Commons voted approval of entry 'in principle' with a majority of 112 votes.

The left in Britain (and in the other countries negotiating for admission alongside it, Ireland, Denmark and Norway) faced a political problem quite distinct from that of the left in the original member nations. The Common Market was formed originally in a very pragmatic way, over a long period of time. It grew up, and the national lefts grew used to it as (at least most of the time) a marginal phenomenon.

Also, it was a phenomenon closely associated with others in their mind: the Cold War, the American presence in Europe, and the predominantly right-wing and Catholic governments of the post-1947 'Restoration' of capitalism. Nor should it be forgotten that the single most theatrical incident of early Europeanism, the rejection of the European Defence Community project by the French parliament in 1954, was a marked defeat for the bolder projects of integration.¹

In 1971, by contrast, left-wing movements of the new member-states confronted a relatively known quantity, a defined entity. The EEC had existed for 14 years. And in the rapidly altering international circumstances of the 1970s it was not so simply identifiable with Atlanticism and reaction as it had formerly been. Hence—or so one would have thought—it was more possible, and much more important, for them to achieve a *conscious* and theoretical understanding of the problem. That is, to ask and answer such questions as: what is 'Europe', in this sense? How is it related to the nation and national state-power? Does it

¹ There is a short account of the abortive (and somewhat neglected) EDC project in U. Kitzinger, *The European Common Market and Community* (1967), pp. 11-14, accompanied by extracts from the decisive speech against ratification by the French Radical Herriot (pp. 61-5), an incredible example of diseased Jacobinism. When the result was announced the entire opposition burst into the *Marseillaise*.

provide more, or less, favourable conditions of action for the left? Do our interests in regard to it coincide with those of the ruling class? or not?

In Britain, this happened to some extent, and in the most interesting way, in the course of 1971's debate about entry. The reaction of the British left to the issue certainly illustrated (or so it will be argued) the extraordinary dilemmas of a 'national' left when confronted with a profound strategic threat, a threat to its traditional essence, rather than the more tactical challenges upon which it normally lives.

In order to consider the phenomenon properly it is necessary to look at it concretely, in context. That 'context' is, of course, the nation, the national State, and the British ruling class. Just because the left in Great Britain as in all other European countries (though to varying degree) has become so identified with the nation-state's substance by long historical experience, its attitudes always derive much of their real meaning from that substance and experience. It may not always look as if this is so, if one takes words and policies at their face value; yet it always is so, in fact.

Look at the same problem from another angle. The political left's subjective self-awareness, its ideal aspiration, is usually couched in universalist terms: in terms of the most general or abstract (and so supra-national or inter-national) values and concepts. This is in the widest sense a European tradition of thought and action, springing from the Enlightenment.² And, of course, it is a European tradition which has in the 20th century turned into a world tradition, a universal habit. Yet it is not the case that these universal ideas have everywhere the same *real* meaning and application. Each national subjectivity may—so to speak—believe itself universal; but it is not, and indeed regarded 'objectively' such self-consciousness is often palpably false—the most important modern example, perhaps, of 'false consciousness' or ideology.

This is not to suggest that the universalizing impulse of the left is intrinsically misled or misleading. On the contrary, it is quite central and indispensable to its being. Without an active and expanding universal consciousness—a consciousness moving from the particular to the universal and sustaining a constant tension between the two—there can be neither radical nor revolutionary political life. But the conditions of such consciousness are another question, regarded realistically at any given moment of history. It is rarely easy to distinguish critically between the 'universal' and the 'particular' in actual instances.

² Perhaps the most telling study in this connection remains the first part of Friedrich Meinecke's *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* (1907, Eng. Trans. 1970), which shows the inextricable closeness of Enlightenment Traditions and even the most pronounced of 19th century nationalisms. When the latter had assumed the 'innate' form of *racism*—the Zenith and Nadir of the nation-state, its apotheosis and its Black Mass, as Deutscher put it—this relationship was still not dissolved altogether. The essence of *racist* 'insanity' remained a perverted 'global mission'—a diseased echo of 'internationalism' as it were.

In Europe, the source of rational universalism, it has become possibly harder than anywhere else. Here the 'particular' is the nation—but also what one author describes as 'the idea of national or racial uniqueness ... the main plank of the crystallized counter-revolution' which ravaged the world in the last century.³ Europe was the source of the disastrous reaction against reason, as well as of the Enlightenment itself. It fell from the greatest height to the utmost and most despicable depth: from the universe of the *philosophes* to one of universal 'national narrowness' and the militant 'uniqueness' of imperialist murder and genocide. It would be optimistic indeed to imagine that it has fully recovered from the experience.

Consequently the problems and ideals of the left remain, in Britain as elsewhere, deeply entwined with a 'national' experience—what one might call the normal experience of separation, or 'capitalism-in-one-country'—whose categories are often taken for granted, instinctively or unconsciously. This is why one has to proceed patiently, and somewhat indirectly, locating the national syntax that determines much of the meaning of the left's language. In today's Europe, whether knowingly or not, every left wing is engaged on a struggle to 'disengage' from the inheritance of the long 'counter-revolution'. And no issue pin-points the strange dilemma more acutely than that of European integration.

The Ideological Function of The Great Debate

A week after returning from the decisive meeting with President Pompidou, Prime Minister Heath launched another campaign to win over public opinion in a tv interview. He needed to: different opinion polls were showing majorities of up to 70 per cent hostile to British entry to Europe. But so many campaigns had been undertaken already on this subject, and had lasted so long, that there were certain obvious difficulties. 'I think', he declared on this occasion, 'that to a certain extent people have become bored with the discussions about the Community.' Nonetheless, they were now to be roused from their boredom. 'This will be an historic decision,' he went on, 'I hope that we will be able to keep the debate on this matter on a high level.' The long-standing argument about the Common Market was to develop into what became known as 'the Great Debate'.

But the people had little intention of giving up their boredom. It was very noticeable how, from the very outset, ironic quotation-marks enclosed the term 'great debate' (with or without ironic capitals). There was certainly to be a debate in the six months following. Or more precisely, a continuation of the mild, somewhat stale and exasperated argument about the topic which had dragged on for years. The wrangle was aggravated and given a clearer party-political form when, in the course of the summer, the Labour Party decided officially to oppose entry. But it never at any moment approached 'greatness', or even excitement.

³ J. L. Talmon, 'Jews Between Revolution and Counter-Revolution' in *Israel Among the Nations* (1970), p. 49.

Part of the explanation for the nullity of 1971 is surely to be found in the very conception of a self-conscious national 'debate'. Nations do not really stage such 'debates' about matters of life and death. Conflicts are thrust upon them. The national soul does not decide genteelly to commune with itself. In genuine crises it is torn apart by dissensions.

There is no lack of examples of what a 'great debate' really means in the life of national societies. Perhaps the most evident case historically is the Dreyfus affair. However, just such a 'great debate' happened to be going on elsewhere in the world in 1971. The United States of America was—and still is—torn in two by the question of Vietnam and all its consequences for the country. Like the Dreyfus scandal this vast conflict has not only convulsed one nation, but spilled over to affect the rest of the world. As far as the left in Europe is concerned, for instance, how much of its new thought and action in the 1960s was a result of this fertilizing influence?

Even more relevant in this context is the last truly great debate which occurred in Great Britain itself. That is, Britain's own equivalent of the present crisis of us imperialism, the conflict which raged (in many different forms) from the mid-1890s down to 1914. That too was a profound and antagonistic dispute upon the nature and orientation of an empire, and its meaning for the quality of life in the domestic society at its centre. Like the American trauma it exacerbated class conflicts, divided and stimulated the intellectuals, and engendered a new left. In it the South African war occupied the place which the Indochina conflict does now for America. The many direct and indirect consequences of that 'debate' carried British society to the point of revolutionary tension and civil war, between 1910 and 1914. The way in which the conflict was resolved proved decisive for the later development of the nation (as will certainly be true for the United States now).

Since we are particularly concerned here with the theoretical positions of the left, it is worth recalling some of the ideas and movements thrown up by that era of fertile antagonism. It gave rise to both the political Labour Party and later to revolutionary syndicalism; it produced the Liberal governmental regime of 1906 and the programme of 'social liberalism' which was (as events turned out) quite decisive for the future strategy of the ruling class in this century; it stimulated (amongst a host of others) books like J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism* of 1902, one of the two most profoundly influential English political works of the century.⁴ That 'debate'—carried on by strikes, suffragettes, angry mobs, artists

⁴ The other was to be Keynes's *General Theory* of 1933. Although in some ways much more influential, since it offered a valuable panacea for capitalist ills, what in Keynes's writings can be compared to the magnificent second section of *Imperialism*, 'The Politics of Imperialism'? Perhaps the latter still offers the best introduction to the period from the point of view relevant here, together with L. T. Hobhouse's *Democracy and Reaction* (1904). Samuel Hynes's *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (1968) provides a valuable general panorama of the development of ideas up to 1914. The best-known account of one part of the period is Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England 1910-14* (1935, re-issued 1971). More recently in *The Quest for National Efficiency 1899-1914* (1971) G. R. Searle has studied the history of the era's most important political slogan.

and music-hall songs, as well as by editorialists and parliamentarians—propelled society forward willy-nilly and forced people to think new thoughts and act originally. It did effectively decide a future national 'destiny' in a number of different ways. These were not the ways that the ruling élite of around 1900 had decided, for the good reason that the ruling class itself had come to be split into two great and complex factions by the underlying dilemma of 'right' versus 'left' (or liberal) imperialism. That is, whether, the British Empire should respond to the German challenge by a 'Prussianization' of its own—'National Efficiency', economic protectionism, and militarism—or attempt to renovate its own more liberal and empirical traditions of free trade and civil consensus. How absurd it is to compare the pseudo-struggle of 1971 to any of these conflicts!

What was the cause of the extraordinary climate of futility and make believe surrounding Britain's approach to Europe? It was certainly not—for instance—because real sources of conflict were lacking in British society. The *longmans* of the 1971 great debate were punctuated by the roar of exploding gellignite and the rattle of machine-guns. In Ireland the Anglo-Scots parliamentary consensus was once more displaying some of its limitations. While the European storm roared around its tea cup, the Conservative industrial relations bill was advancing steadily through parliament, towards its aim of curbing the economic power of the trade unions and the working class. The act was necessary because of a serious sharpening of class struggle in Britain. As the previous Prime Minister had once declared: 'We face the problem of an assertion of the power of the factory floor, a problem . . . which is growing throughout Europe, a problem to which no country has so far found the answer'.⁵ Here was the Heath 'answer', one aspect of a whole new aggressive ruling-class strategy (often described as 'abrasive') which tolerated, or even sought, a higher degree of conflict in politics.

It is true that Great Britain was less shaken by the great wave of change and dissent of the 1960s than most other countries in western Europe (except in its Northern Ireland province). Nonetheless, things had altered sensibly. 1971 occurred in a context of growing conflict, revealed in industrial relations, in the style and policies of the new government, in Ireland, in the decline and difficulty of the old left opposition (Labour and Communist) and the emergence of new left rivals. Although quite limited in comparison to, for example, the United States or the Italy of the same period, these changes took place against a background of unique national stability and consensus. Indeed there is a very marked contrast between the conditions of 1971 and the relative calm which prevailed at the time of Britain's first entry attempt of 1961–2.

However, the debate on Europe did not enter into this trend towards conflict. It did not contribute—in spite of appearances—to the unfolding of the contradictions at work, and so to the positive disintegration of British conservatism. It did not express these vital conflicts of the social order—the sharpening class struggle, the death-throes of the quasi-colonial regime in Ulster, the general confrontation

⁵ Harold Wilson, Guildhall speech, 10 November 1969.

between political tradition and novelty—but stood apart from them. Far from acting as a solvent of national consensus, it considerably reinforced the latter's flagging vitality.

This is how the situation of the 'great debate' differed so totally from, for example, the Edwardian debate on empire mentioned above. In the latter case the 'ideological' issue of right-wing or Tory imperialism versus 'liberal' imperialism served as an effective lightning-conductor to real social conflict, as a means of political, emotional and intellectual polarization. That was why it 'mattered' in a way which quite precluded the boredom of 1971. It functioned as an element of fission, favouring the profound and fertile agitation of the period.⁶ And in turn that agitation of civil society imparted its vitality to the battle of ideas, creating the well-known intensity and variety of the period's thought and art.

The live dialectic of that era, when compared to the stultification of Great Britain's more recent moment of destiny, suggests an answer to the question we are considering. No ideal debate really 'stands apart' from basic social antagonisms—least of all, surely, in an over-organic national entity like Great Britain. If it fails to give voice to them, the chances are it is functioning in some way to stifle them. In that case, the deadly inertia of the 'great debate' must have come from its role as obstacle, or diversion, in the play of social forces. Paraded as a noble expression of national dispute, it must have worked in reality as repression—as reaffirmation of the national consensus, the sacramental unity. The aim of the national breast-heaving was only, in the end, to pull the national corsets tighter still.

Some sense of the likelihood of this may have been what created popular scepticism regarding the European argument from the beginning. People know very well they live in a land where all overt conflicts are forestalled, cushioned by commissions of inquiry, impartially arbitrated, smuggled out of sight, forgotten about, made jokes of, regarded with embarrassment, and—if the worst comes to the worst—deprecated and deeply regretted. How then could they believe in the genuineness of such an invitation to public combat?

The rulers made the suggestion because of their confidence in their power—in the strength of the 'consensus'. There could be a 'Great Debate', an exercise in national navel-scratching, just because there would be no great debate: things could be relied on not to get out of hand. The *spectacle* would not simply substitute for the reality, but also help prevent it happening. What is the nation, if not a bottomless box of tricks of just this sort? If one may compare the macrocosm to the microcosm, the British nation is like one of its own Royal Commissions in permanent séance: it translates trouble from the realm of the real to that of the official word, the ethereal, confident that the latter's magic will work back again to resolve (or at least help contain) any real disturbance.

⁶ Ch. VII of Bernard Semmel's *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895-1914* (1960), 'The Two Imperialisms', gives the best short definition of the ideological side of the conflict.

II Ruling-class Europe: The Times and the Nation

The situation is a dynamic one, moving dialectically. Right now, we seem to be in the midst of a major revolution in international relationships as modern science establishes the technological basis for a major advance in the conquest of the material world and the beginnings of truly cosmopolitan production.'

Stephen Hymer, 'The Multinational Corporation and the Law of Uneven Development,' in *Economics and World Order from the 1970s to the 1990s*, ed. J. Bhagwati (1972).⁷

The general paradox of the inexistent 'great debate' was the setting for a number of other paradoxes. Where would one have expected to find the strongest resentment against entering the Common Market? Among the most nationalist sector of the bourgeoisie and the ruling groups, surely—the chief custodians of the nation and all it means, the descendants of Churchill and Disraeli, the men and the party of 1940. Yet here there was to be almost no opposition at all. Where would one have logically expected to find least resistance? Surely, in the 'progressive' party to the left, with its traditions of moral internationalism and its strong and ancient distrust of narrow right-wing chauvinism—all the more so since that same party, recently in power, had led another attempt to gain admittance to the Market. Yet Labour was to become the focus of national opposition to entry, and the outspoken voice of chauvinist self-interest against Heath's 'betrayal'.

Moving farther left beyond the Labour Party, the sense of paradox becomes even stronger. Britain's marxist and anarchist *groupuscules*, who together inherit the most vocal and uncompromising of all internationalist traditions, either supported Labour's standpoint or strove to out-do it. Perhaps the most stern opponent of all was the Communist Party of Great Britain. Not only was 'national sovereignty' defended from the left, it was defended most angrily by one sector of the 'marxist' left.

The Times and Europe

The source of this odd national logic must be sought in the European policy of the ruling class. Where better to start than with *The Times*? As the main focus of civil society's conscience, *The Times* helps form its 'official'—or State-oriented—world-view, the consciousness of the English 'establishment'. Its peculiar authoritativeness both reflects and helps maintain a certain kind of relationship between civil society and the State (the essence of the English polity). 'Without the kind of picture of the world the old *Times* used to give, the world it pictures

⁷ Hymer suggests that if one substitutes 'multinational corporation' for 'bourgeoisie' in the celebrated passage of the *Communist Manifesto* dealing with the capitalist economic revolution (from 'The need of a constantly expanding market . . .' down to 'lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff', Marx-Engels *Selected Works*, one vol. edition 1968, pp. 38-9) the result is a reasonable portrait of the present.

cannot exist,' writes a contemporary critic of the paper's 'degeneration'.⁸

Between 28 April and 4 May 1971, *The Times* gave forth an interesting series of articles characteristically entitled 'The Prospect of Britain', in which editor Rees-Mogg offered the nation a philosophical survey of its present and future. The sermon's main point was unmistakable. From a responsible ruling-class point of view, the nation has no future at all outside Europe.

First of all he found it necessary to deal with the young, recently the cause of some excitement even in Great Britain. He calculated shrewdly that this *Zeitgeist* was now in weak enough shape to be put quickly on the canvas. The young romantics resent 'the middle generation, the middle-aged, middle-class generation, which dominates the life of the west'; they want poetry, love, fulfilment. 'They would like a world of expanded rather than contracted consciousness . . . They want to shatter the consciousness their fathers wanted to control,' he went on.⁹ Ignorant of 'the power of selfishness' and the dangers of real (as opposed to spiritual) revolution. 'They have a certain Shelley-like gentleness and sweetness about them'. So all is well. Reduced in this way to the category of bourgeois intellectual romanticism, the new wave of trouble-makers will—by implication—all turn into selfish mediocrities and *Times*-readers in due course.

Rees-Mogg believes that English civil society still retains enough of its distinctive capacity to absorb intellectual dissent. It has never been a merely capitalist society, consecrated to what he refers to as 'the monetary obsession'. Its 'voluntary tradition' is still strong he points out. Environmentalism offers much hope, in association with the deep-rooted romantic anti-industrialism so characteristic of the national intelligentsia in the past. Once reinforced by the new ecological world-fashion of the moment, the national obsession with village greens and rootedness may yet serve the ruling class well. English polity has always depended upon giving the intellectuals abundant useful work to do, in private or public charity, the universities, parliamentary-political life, or the formation of responsible public opinion through media (like *The Times*, *The Guardian*, or the BBC). Over-employment is the best antidote to the sort of ungrateful and spiteful speculation which

⁸ In the review *The Human World*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1970). *The Human World* is the organ of a despairing clique of academic arch-reactionaries devoted to the cult of Professor F. R. Leavis. It sees *The Times*'s descent into 'vulgarisation' and 'thoughtless modernism' as a portent of British society's fall into democracy. Contraception, education, TV and the Beatles; and now even *The Times* is giving in. Is there no hope at all? In general, no socialist or truly liberal reader can fail to derive both satisfaction and entertainment from a study of this periodical, whose damp spiritual *cul-de-sac* represents, surely, the last gasp of elite conservative pseudo-humanism.

⁹ One suspects Rees-Mogg may have been launched along this track by Charles Reich's neo-Christian tract *The Greening of America*, from which *The Times* had just published some extracts. This grisly mixture of protestant revivalism and Dale Carnegie stands in the same relationship to the young rebels of the 1960s as films like *The Graduate* or *Love Story*: by focusing on the positive, Christian, spiritual side of things it discovers that the 'revolution' was in reality subjectivity, romantic yearning, a change of heart. As such it 'has a case'. Britain inaugurated the 1970s with its own notable contribution to this spiritualist counter-offensive, Bryan Forbes' *The Ragging Moon* (1970), whose theme was a rebel couple confined to wheelchairs, condemned permanently, therefore, to impotent romantic rage at the way of the world.

an intelligentsia is (by its abstract, bookish formation) naturally heir to. Rees-Mogg is confident that the 'valid' elements in youthful rebellion can all be incorporated into this healthy, organic tradition and neutralized.¹⁰

But there are few other signs of hope on the national horizon. As befits a *Times* man and a moulder of London élite opinion, one senses that the editor's heart lies with the country-house and stately City rituals rather than with modern capitalist production. Nevertheless, the apparatus of 'civilization' which he treasures rests upon the latter in the last resort. And here the outlook is grim. 'The latest *Financial Times* survey of capital spending intentions is extremely depressing—the worst in four years . . .'¹¹ Rolls-Royce had just collapsed: 'It used to be said that Rolls-Royce was Britain; if we stay out of Europe, Britain will be Rolls-Royce.' After so much belletrist rumination upon changes of heart, 'how we talk to each other', romanticism to responsibility and so on, a distinct atmosphere of panic emerges here. While we minuet in the drawing-room the chateau's foundations may be sliding away beneath our very feet.

Nor is the panic wholly economic. Unlike so many others, Rees-Mogg remembers the last election—only two years ago—and the vile odours that emanated from it. It was dominated not by the question of European entry (scarcely discussed) but by extreme-right themes of 'law and order' and racism, and by the single personality of Enoch Powell. *The Times* was then one of the few organs which commented frankly upon the sour introspective nationalism of the moment: 'The parochialism of the election is quite extraordinary . . . It cannot be pretended that the tone of debate . . . suggests that we are experiencing anything but our most complacent hour.'¹² What if that odious insularity, that climate of resentment and bigotry, were to be farther aggravated by failure to get into Europe? Then, the industrial situation being what it is—'There would be at some point in the 1970s a choice between intense national discipline and gross national impoverishment. One may wonder who would be the man for that hour?' Continued isolation of the nation would create the right conditions for the arch-nationalist Powell, and for the racism and authoritarianism which the 1969–70 period had given a foretaste of.¹³ And the consequences of *that* for 'civilization' need no underlining.

¹⁰ He may well be wrong about this. A good deal of the new generation of subversives has undeniably succumbed to romanticism and to nature or crypto-Christian cults. But it may live long enough to fight its way out. *The Times* itself has chronicled the steep rise in British graduate unemployment since the later 1960s.

¹¹ In their article, 'The Critical Condition of British Capital', A. Glyn and B. Sutcliffe give a striking portrait of the industrial sector's crisis: *New Left Review* No. 66 (March–April 1971). The analysis is amplified in their Penguin *British Capitalism, Workers and the Profit Squeeze* (1972).

¹² 'A Strange Absence of Debate', 6 June, 1970.

¹³ This trader in national resurrectionism and necrophilia has been forced back into the margins of political life since 1970, mainly by the unity of the ruling class over the European question. There, he occupies his time with the now out-moded currency-crankery of Milton Friedman's Chicago School, and fitful repetition of all his 1960s scare-stories. In June 1971 he could still imagine he would lead a gigantic national campaign against joining Europe: 'The British have woken up and got to their feet. They have rubbed their eyes and cleared their throats and got ready

Similar reflections clearly lie behind Rees-Mogg's support for the government elected at that time. It is emphatically not a government representing the liberal-conservative values which he cherishes. 'The tone of decisiveness is itself popular,' he notes, wincing visibly. In some ways the Heath regime evidently stands for that disintegration of civil society into mere bourgeois 'selfishness', which (elsewhere) he perceives as the great danger. The new prime minister stands for 'a decided philosophy of individualist *laissez-faire* . . . with a definite, if in some ways narrow, interpretation of the national interest'. Such a brusque eruption of naked bourgeois spirit into the sphere of government is an 'historic gamble': in other words, a last desperate attempt to solve the underlying economic problem, even at the cost of some sacrifice of national unity, precious and tactful continuity, the liberal patina of rule, and so on. But—again—the outcome of the gamble depends upon Europe.¹⁴

Thus, things have to be changed, so that they can go on being the same. The risks and sacrifices of Heath's 'abrasive' government will be justified if it joins the nation to Europe and restores a modicum of vitality to British industrial capitalism. It is time Great Britain stopped 'being itself' (in Powell's archaic sense) in order to go on being itself at all. To preserve the real essence—'civilization', etc—a basic change of posture is needed, and in this some 'abrasion' may be inevitable.

However, governments come and go. While *The Times*, the ruling class and the civil society they dominate go on for ever. Rees-Mogg also looks forward (with distinctly more enthusiasm) to the time of national 'reconciliation' which ought to follow Heath's administration, when all the organic continuities and magical myths can be patched up again. Then—safely in the Common Market, the economic foundations repaired, readjusted to modern times—the essential nation should be in better shape than ever. Here, surely, is the task of the Labour Party: to restore the national *spirit* once the material body is healed: 'Only the Labour Party has remained in a moderate and central position . . . It would be ironic, but not altogether surprising if the later 1970s showed a Labour government quietly adjusting the nation to changes made by a radical Conservative government.' Such a Labour regime would preside over the indispensable 'change of manners'—over that spiritual moment which, alone, can continue and preserve what is previously described as 'the social harmony of the post-war development of Britain'.

In this quaint panorama Europe occupies the key place. If the object of such a ruling-class world-view is to indicate a strategic way forward

... to give their answer. There is something almost uncanny, something which makes the pulse beat a little quicker, in watching a whole nation instinctively cut through and thrust aside details, pretences, trivialities, and go to the heart of the matter . . . the one simple question: to be or not to be, to be ourselves or not to be ourselves. A national instinct has stirred and . . . taken shape and strength', etc, etc. *The Common Market—the Case Against*, J. Enoch Powell (1971), pp. 112–13. As well as these Hamletic vagaries, this volume contains the speeches at Turin, The Hague, Frankfurt, Lyons and Clacton-on-Sea with which he failed to re-launch the ship of destiny.

¹⁴ See especially the article 'Mr Heath's Historic Gamble', 30 April 1971.

amid the multiple contradictory pressures facing the 'Top People' who read the paper, then moving towards the European Community is the only real choice. Empire and Commonwealth have gone; so has the special relationship to the American empire which replaced them, and—with the crisis of us economic imperialism—any idea of an Atlantic free-trade area. Six years of unbelievable stagnation and failure had led to the ascent of Powell and the vicious climate of 1969–70. 'In 1961', writes the editor, when entry to Europe was first contemplated, 'we were entering the rapids; now we can hear the rumble of the falls . . .' So ten years later the only way forward (or way out) is Europe.

The path appears as economic and political at the same time. As for 'culture', the situation is a little different. Since British bourgeois society's sole remaining asset seems to be its power to 'absorb' or bamboozle another generation of intellectuals, Europe is less urgent here. However, such admirable self-sufficiency at least does little to contradict the general perspective. At this point Rees-Mogg has only to reach for the same ample *schmaltz*-ladle as other Europeanist ideologues: 'There is also the even wider challenge . . . of the civilization of Europe. It is the civilization we share, rather than the technology we could create, which can harmonize a true patriotism of Britain with a true patriotism of Europe . . .' Shakespeare too has his part to play. 'Europe', as *The Times* conceives history, is also a spirit-corpus of essentially christian culture where the different dialects will all merge, eventually, into one single language of obscurantism.¹⁵

British Capitalism and Europe

The Times's resonant strains convey clearly the wide complex of motives pulsating (however incoherently) in élite breasts. In particular they display vividly the sense of growing frustration and littleness—almost of claustrophobia—felt by an ex-imperialist class whose range of action has been reduced practically to zero. However, they betray rather than directly discuss the large economic pressures which are also operative in determining this kind of general orientation.

Yet more understanding of these is obviously central to the problem we are considering: the remarkable unity of the ruling class over Europe. For example, in the analysis of Britain's industrial weakness referred to above (n. 11), Glyn and Sutcliffe are forced to ask why such chronic domestic difficulty has not given rise to the classic answer: protectionism. 'It would seem logical to strengthen the position of British capital . . . by more protectionism', they write, 'but protection would be in complete contradiction to the policy of entry to the Common Market,

¹⁵ This terrain is more tricky than *The Times* allows for here. To *The Human World* (to take the obvious example) this professorial spiritland where Tolstoy looks Rabelais straight in the eye and Dickens compares notes with Dante is a powerful reason for staying *out* of 'Europe'. Every *esprit de clocher* has its own version of 'internationalism' for comfort and defence. For this one we are 'in Europe' already, *qua* national culture-spirits, and could not possibly be more so. The Common Market—by contrast—is mere materialism, and Heath is 'a genuine Marxist' full of 'primal lust for power, disencumbered of any roots in a community'. See article on the great debate, 'The Great National Débat', *The Human World* No. 5 (Nov. 1971).

which would have precisely the opposite effect . . . It is very hard, therefore, to understand the Tory party's eagerness for the Common Market given the position of extreme weakness of British capital . . . For many of the smaller firms the Common Market means certain death.¹⁶ Protectionism in this sense seems to be congruent with political and cultural nationalism—that is, with the climate of involution and near-racism which so recently made such a significant impact on the scene. Why is it then that—to the relief of Rees-Mogg and many others—this threat has retreated so markedly in the past two years? Certainly not because the situation of domestic industry improved noticeably in 1970-2.

However, the industrial-capitalist sector which has suffered so badly from sustained deflation and absence of investment in recent times represents only one part of the whole capitalist order in Great Britain. And it is the part which has traditionally played the most subordinate of roles in the formulation of overall politico-economic strategy. Any such general strategy has to be synthesized out of the various (often conflicting) interests at work within capitalism at one given moment. In Britain, the principal peculiarity of the system is that one such interest normally exercises overwhelming dominance over the rest. It has therefore usually laid down the 'strategy' of the moment with astonishingly little opposition. Indeed, so striking and permanent has its hegemony been that it has in effect governed the economic outlook of the State for the greater part of this century.

This 'interest' is, of course, that of the City, or of London-based finance-capital. Although in one sense describable as an 'interest' or 'sector' of the national capitalist order, in another these terms appear as misnomers for the City. The historical configuration of capitalism in Great Britain is such that this one area long ago developed an organic ascendancy over the others—becoming as it were the 'brain' or nervous system of the whole.¹⁷ In the City, the economic side of civil society found its unity, its distinctive system; through this unity it regulated the economic action of the State. In virtue of its international outlook and function, its original and inherent imperialism, this form of finance-capital also enjoyed a marked relative autonomy from the domestic economy. The dominant 'brain' of British capitalism stood independent from the very 'body' it controlled so easily, resting upon its great institutional strength and its world network of contacts.¹⁸ In

¹⁶ Glyn and Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁷ The decisive moment of this ascendancy was, precisely, the triumph of the 'liberal imperialism' referred to above. The victory of the latter was also that of free trade and finance-capital over the protectionism and militarism of Joseph Chamberlain, a representative of the 'manufacturing interest' seriously menaced by Britain's new industrial competitors at that time.

¹⁸ In the most valuable of recent general outlines of the British economy, discussing the causes of the 'stop-go' cycle and the notorious post-war difficulties of the domestic economy, S. Pollard concludes: 'Above all . . . Britain was uniquely saddled with a complex of financial interests, the 'City', which were not directly dependent on the welfare of industry (as were financiers in other countries), and with an all-powerful Treasury with inadequate access either to economic science or to industry . . . (and) . . . totally subservient to the doctrines and appraisals of the City, transmitted by the Bank of England.' To this extraordinary hegemony, he notes, there corresponds the

the City, not only did the 'universal' rule over the particular, money-power over industrial power. When required, the former could sacrifice the latter to its own interest, sublimated as the 'national interest' (originally the gold standard, then the pound sterling).

So it is wrong to imagine 'capitalism' in Great Britain as an undifferentiated bloc, or as a multiplicity of interests vaguely dominated by the largest corporate units or monopolies. It shows rather a profound (and often contradictory) division into two major sectors: a relatively 'undynamic' industrialism with feeble political leadership, and an enormously over-grown financial elite with world-wide aspirations and the strongest influence upon the State.¹⁹ Historically, the former is of course in many ways the inheritance of the industrial revolution (from which something of its archaism and absent-minded mediocrity may derive); the latter represents the nerve of the later imperialist fortunes accumulated on the back of Britain's early industrial success—an accumulation destined, finally, to quite overshadow and weigh down the basis on which it had grown. This division presents a further curious aspect. The relative 'independence' of the sector dominated by finance-capital is so marked that it constitutes almost an 'off-shore island'—an abstract capital of Capital, so to speak, yet able to rule the real island around it from the one square mile of the historic City limits.²⁰

The City's Caution

It follows that a primary determinant of ruling economic strategy towards the Common Market must have been the City's attitude. Here, it is interesting to see how until recently there were substantial reser-

relative 'lack of drive from the productive sector' allowing consistent sacrifice of the latter to the City. *The Development of the British Economy, 1914-1967* (1968), pp. 483-4. See also (among recent discussions) Royden Harrison, 'Labour Government: Then and Now' *Political Quarterly* vol. 41 no. 1 (Jan-March 1970), p. 74; and Pollard, *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, No. 16 (1968), pp. 33-41.

¹⁹ It is sometimes objected that such a division is impossible because of the 'interpenetration' of industrial and financial capital in modern conditions. But the particular sort of 'interpenetration' notable in Great Britain has, if anything, tended to aggravate the split. Some large industrial units are indeed allies of City cosmopolitanism, and also operate globally. Yet, points out Bob Rowthorn in a study of modern imperialism, 'the very strength of the cosmopolitan activities of British capital . . . has helped to undermine further its strictly domestic economy'. *New Left Review* No. 69 (Sept-Oct. 1971), p. 46. The great overseas interests of these (more 'dynamic') elements of industrial capitalism force them into the same stance as the City *vis-à-vis* the over-narrow home market, whenever the contradiction of interests becomes acute. Time and time again, the same author notes, they have acquiesced in policies of 'stability' rather than 'growth'.

²⁰ Writing in *The Banker* (Nov. 1970) J. Cooper, of the merchant bank Schroder Wagg, advised a 'cautious, agnostic view' of the Common Market, since its regulations might curtail the total liberty of finance-capital: 'The prosperity of the City's international business depends on the willingness of . . . the British authorities to treat the City as an "off-shore island" outside the controls imposed on domestic institutions . . . The City thus has a strong interest in seeing that whatever arrangements . . . are developed within the Common Market, it preserves the independent, "off-shore" position *vis-à-vis* those arrangements that it currently enjoys *vis-à-vis* the domestic monetary arrangements of Britain.' The City had to think more than twice before giving up such superb privilege to join a group of continental economies notorious for not allowing the banks to wring their necks every time exchange-value is threatened.

variations about entry. The point of such doubts was that the off-shore 'world role' could—at least for a time—be perceived as independent not only of Great Britain's home economy, but of a prospective European unit as well. The City had not simply survived the decline of Britain's sterling empire. It had gone on to forge a new central position for itself in the dollar-dominated economy of the 1960s. The combination of great 'institutional' strength and the inability of United States capitalism to create a financial centre effectively displacing the City from the world money-markets allowed London to recoup its fortunes. It moved from being the capital of Sterling to being the capital of the Euro-dollar.²¹ It had lost its own empire, true; yet the humiliation was compensated by the enviable post as chief broker to its rival, the dollar empire. Having landed on its feet once in a generation, would it not be tempting providence to risk abandoning this for the uncertain prospects of a continental monetary union?

Some such thought must, claims *The Economist*, have been what 'raised a number of voices in the City of London against the whole idea of joining Europe' early in 1971.²² Again, off-shore freedom was the vital preoccupation. London's strength (and standard of living) depended upon 'a unique alliance between word-of-mouth business and a liberal central banking regime'. The total liberty accorded by the government of the British nation-state 'allowed London to collar the bulk of Europe's Euro-dollar business. Membership of a restrictionist regime would kill this freedom, and with it London's edge . . . London has become the centre for mobile dollar funds precisely because it lies outside the restrictions put on financial markets in New York and Europe by their own authorities'. Why take any risk, even the slightest, of such a Liberty Hall being closed up? Naturally, London's great power and facilities would let it flourish inside the Common Market, even with a monetary union. But would it not be able to exploit such a union from outside just as well?

If the City had ardently desired to be inside the Common Market, there can be little doubt that Great Britain would have swallowed its political doubts and entered long ago. A way would have been found round de Gaulle's suspicions, and the problems of the declining Commonwealth and American special relationship. But as things were, the earlier approaches to Europe remained very much a part of British foreign policy: that is, embedded in a conservative tangle of pious delusions and grandiose immobilism. In a brilliant analysis of this late-imperial policy, Peter Nettl and David Shapiro point out that it consisted essentially in doing nothing, for the simple reason that a

²¹ 'The proportion of world official reserves held in sterling, which was about 23 per cent in 1948, stood at 8 per cent at the end of 1969, and is continuing to decline . . . It would be surprising if the share of world trade financed in sterling were now more than 15 per cent.' P. Oppenheimer, *The Banker* (Oct. 1970), p. 1049. Yet in spite of this apparently drastic decline, London's international business in fact increased hugely in the later 1960s: overseas earnings went up nearly two-and-a-half times between 1965 and 1969. In the above-mentioned article, Cooper attributes this to the fact that in the great expansion of international trade in the 1960s, 'institutional facilities . . . for the dollar's international rôle have not taken root in New York', so allowing the City to change rôles.

²² 'London's Invisible Gains from the EEC', 24 July 1971, p. 61.

declining and dependent power still obsessed by its separate greatness *could* do nothing to reverse the inexorable conditions of its fall.²³ Behind the grandiloquent, laboriously maintained facade sat an old invalid sinking ever deeper into his armchair. Churchill had imagined Britain's world rôle as the centre, the focus, of capitalist *Weltpolitik*: the island where the celebrated 'three circles' of action coincided—the Empire, the Anglo-American or North Atlantic condominium, and Europe. As real power evaporated after the war, this inevitably became mere global posturing. However, the 'concept of global responsibility' (as Nettl and Shapiro put it) remained 'very dear' to both governments and oppositions, and in relation to it the Common Market seemed quite a parochial question. Commenting on the 'great debate' surrounding the first half-hearted attempt to join (the term was used then too), the authors show how it came to a dead stop after de Gaulle's veto: 'The habit of reinsurance against failure, coupled with mythology, has failed to provide any stimulus to finding a real alternative to membership of the Community, let alone the formulation of counter-measures to force our way in. We have not really had any *alternative* foreign policy since the war...'

In the context of this ancient political imperialism the wish of some important elements of British capitalism to get into the Common Market had only a moderate weight.²⁴ It was enough to incline governments definitely towards Europe, but never enough to make them give the project the absolute priority and risk the sharp break with tradition which it required. After all, ruling classes normally want to have the best of as many worlds as possible at any given time, and sacrifice only what they have to. The British ruling class had had more than most. Its traditions of imperialist 'internationalism'—comporting a certain anti-European or at least a-European side—were strong. And throughout the 1960s these traditions were maintained in life, against all the odds and in spite of the growing difficulties of British industry, by the phoenix-like power of the City: London-based finance-capital, once the nerve of Britain's distinctive empire, proved by its very abstraction—its degree of alienation from national realities, as it were—astonishingly resistant to the decline. What other *material* reality was there, to support the incredible climate of complacency and involution which distinguished the last two years of the Wilson government and came to a head in the 1970 election?²⁵

²³ 'Institutions versus Realities—a British Approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1965).

²⁴ *Britain in Europe* (1969) is the last of many measured statements by the Confederation of British Industries on the advantages of entry. City opinion just prior to the decisive moment is voiced in *The Pound into Europe* (1971), articles collected from *The Banker*, 1970–1. See also C. G. Tether, 'Business Community and *etc.*: the Truth', *Financial Times* (22 October 1971). Mr Tether remarks 'The truth is . . . that the great bulk of British trade and industry is incapable of feeling the kind of enthusiasm for entering the *etc.* that its top bodies have claimed . . .'

²⁵ As the position of the industrial sector degenerated, unemployment grew, and class conflict became more conscious and embittered, the City thrived. In 1971, finally, it enjoyed 'the best year in its history'. So it ought to have done. Wilson's government had pursued the traditional deflationary economic policy so favourable to the City with greater energy than ever before, bringing about that 'healthy surplus in the balance-of-payments' essential to it. This bank-book 'health' was indeed the profane secret of his parade of natural authority and antique wisdom at the 1970 election.

In itself, then, this picture does not convey a reason for the very strong impulse of unity which was to animate the ruling class over the Common Market issue in 1971. If anything it re-poses the question asked above: why, against the background of a capitalism suffering from such profound and paralysing contradictions—contradictions aggravated rather than appeased by the economic history of the period before 1971—was there not more dissent within the ruling class? Or at least some doubt and dissatisfaction, of a kind exploitable through the conventional middle-class reflexes of touchy nationalism (as Powell had clearly imagined there would be)? Above all at a widely publicized moment of 'destiny', 'irrevocable choice', and so on, where divergences should have grown sharper and more defined, rather than the reverse?

Out of Immobilism

Since the spring of 1971, in spite of its earlier incertitude, there has been scarcely a squeak of opposition or doubt about Europe from the City. The 'off-shore island' complex vanished—or at least was repressed in honour of the government's decisive new strategy. The period of the debate about entry coincided, in fact, with this strong movement away from the old paralysis and uncertainty. What *force majeure* provided the basis for such a movement at the economic level, and helped Heath iron out all the potential contradictions of his ruling group with such success?

The moment of the Heath-Pompidou meeting was also that of the renewed dollar crisis. The whole capitalist monetary order plunged into disarray, far more seriously than on previous occasions. Subsequently, the debate on Europe was punctuated by Nixon's desperate measures of 15 August; not long after its conclusion the dollar was devalued. Summing up the events of those six months, Pierre Mendès-France wrote: 'Events have shown that the richest country in the world can no longer create means of payment and go on plunging into bottomless debt: beyond a certain point creditors become anxious, a crisis of confidence becomes inevitable, and the whole mechanism breaks down. This is what is happening now. In addition can it be any longer allowed that one national currency, administered by national authorities with national aims in mind, be the only international means of settlement—and that its ups and downs and mishaps go on affecting the fate of countries and peoples who have no way of influencing its management?'²⁶

His question points to the long-term implications of the crisis for London. If the dollar no longer stably represents the 'general interest' of the capitalist world, but appears as one 'national interest' among

²⁶ 'Pour un nouvel aménagement monétaire international', *Le Monde*, 12–13 December 1971. See also 'Banks on the International Money and Capital Markets', by R. H. Lutz, in *Banking in a Changing World*, Proceedings of the 24th International Banking Summer School, Chiavari, Italy, May 1971: 'The banker in his international activity operates within a framework the fairness of which is determined not primarily by the banks themselves but rather by international politics . . . The future, it would seem, could hold even greater risks and dangers than the recent past . . .' (p. 205).

others, then the City's rôle as servant of that general interest is automatically threatened. Its history in this century ought to have equipped it to understand this particular dilemma well enough. Having been itself the heart of the old gold standard system prior to 1914, it lost it through war and the inevitable development of the rivals to Great Britain's economic imperialism. There ensued a long period of monetary anarchy, where it struggled in vain to reconquer its old central function as 'banker to the world'. Was not something analogous now happening to America's dollar empire, opening another era of prolonged instability and crisis?

But within this newer financial 'general interest' London had retained a vital place. No longer the centre, it was still the most important epicentre. Hence its off-shore function in the Euro-dollar market obviously depended upon the continued viability of the system as a whole. No longer owning the great universal casino, it had stayed deeply involved in the business as head croupier. Here, the City's stance in the economic world had run exactly parallel to that of the Great-British state: increasing dependence upon a world-order which (from its traditional base) it was also quite powerless to affect or change. The dilemma of the national State was here that of its *raison d'être*, finance capital. In this topsy-turvy universe, the national interest was internationalism, or the cosmopolitan side of capitalism. This is why, as Bob Rowthorn has indicated, 'The economic policies of British governments have . . . been so highly sensitive to the advice of the international institutions of the capitalist world and of the largest imperial power, the United States . . . The international expansion of British big capital coupled with the contraction of the British state and the domestic economic base of British capitalism have between them . . . led to sections of the British bourgeoisie being effectively "denationalized" . . . The overseas strength of British big capital has compounded the debility of British capitalism.' Comparison with other capitalist powers (he concludes) shows how 'the British case demonstrates the perils of expansion via direct investment unsustained by a sufficiently strong sponsoring state and home base'.²⁷

However, these perils had remained latent and tolerable, as long as US ascendancy remained strong. In 1971 it grew markedly weaker, at the very moment of the renewed British approach to the Common Market. Not only was the collapse a dramatic one; as almost every financial commentator pointed out at once, the chances of repairing the damage rapidly and permanently were very faint. Faced with this long-term threat, in what direction could British big capital turn to escape from its quite peculiarly exposed and precarious position?

In the new and harsher international climate its restricted home base and weak state protection might turn from a hindrance into a disaster. Yet little could be done about these, in themselves: British national

²⁷ Rowthorn, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-7. The situation he outlines is, of course, the one behind the postures of diplomatic futility discussed by Nettl and Shapiro in their article referred to above. Great Britain was forced to be the 'good boy' of the western world and eschew policies of assertive nationalism precisely because of this economic dependence. 'The Pound' in its post-war wretchedness could afford nothing more glamorous.

economic policy since 1945 had been, indeed, one prolonged and painful commentary upon just how little could be done. What other possible answer was there but the Common Market?

This required a rapid acceleration of the hitherto dignified and portly 'imperial' approach to the matter. The gentlemanly perambulation turned into a run. While it will be long before the history of the change can be written, these considerations may help one to see how little ground there was for serious dissensions inside the economic ruling class in 1971. The great leap forward into Europe can hardly be 'explained' by these factors alone, but they may help explain the remarkable absence of serious material obstacles. When it came to the bit, the interests of finance capital and the industrial monopolies were possibly more positively and actively united than at any moment since before 1914 (save in time of war). As for the smaller fish mentioned above (who are still likely to go under in Europe) their power to intervene effectively or even to be a nuisance has long depended in British conditions mainly upon splits among the leaders. They represent the most subordinate and politically amorphous elements within the generally subordinate industrial sector of British capitalism. Whatever doubts they harbour they seem (as usual) to have done as they were told to by the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*.

Thus, in the final conjuncture of the 'great debate' economic pressures and the rapid alterations in world economics combined to fulfil (indeed over-fulfil) Mr Rees-Mogg's *Timesian* prospect. They provided the material preconditions for a rapid forward movement, a brisk acceleration out of the habitually sluggish tempo of British political affairs. Confronted with the impossibility of enlarging its own national base (i.e. of solving its own economic problem by pulling at its own bootstraps) British capitalism had to opt finally for the larger basis offered by Europe. In the new conditions, even the City's grand abstraction needed some 'national' economic reality for security. Since the Great-British one had proven its inadequacy, the Common Market would have to take its place—in spite of all the dangers and restrictive possibilities mentioned above. Needs must go where the Devil—in this case the faltering grip of us empire—drives.

Fuite en avant

The long history of British City-led capitalism's half-heartedness and doubt about Europe, when set in the longer perspective of British imperialism's 'maritime' (i.e. extra-European) tradition could easily lead to the conclusion that Britain will remain half-hearted and dubious once inside the European Community. But, because British capital took so long to arrive at this turning-point, it does not follow that the same dithering course will characterize it now the corner is turned. Far from being a permanent obstacle to European cohesion and projects of political unity, British capital and the British State may soon become actively favourable to them.

The first and most obvious of these reasons why is simply the great strength of London finance-capital and its institutions, in relation to the

Common Market. Commenting on the 1971 report on Europe by the British Committee on Invisible Exports, *The Economist* noted complacently that—'When London is measured against Europe's other capital markets, like is not being compared with like . . . The growth and preponderance of London this side of the Atlantic even ahead of Britain's joining Europe is dramatic. The growth of the City's earnings in recent years has been unprecedented . . . It is important to grasp this almost giant-pigmy relationship between London and its European fellows.'²⁸ Because this force held itself apart from Europe for so long in the cultivation of more traditional 'imperial' rôles, it would be mistaken to imagine this automatically continuing under the new circumstances. The 'new course' of the ruling class is far more likely to encourage headlong assault on the new 'home base'. The same *Economist* survey goes on to point out: 'A faster run-down of the Commonwealth link might (theoretically) hurt London's merchanting houses and commodity brokers . . . In fact the opposite is likely to happen if London becomes, as it already shows every sign of doing, the 'financial growth pole' of Europe'.

Speaking more specifically of the stock exchange, the current President of the French stock exchange commission Pierre Chatenet said recently that London's entry on to the European scene would constitute a potent motive to 'Europeanization'. 'Quantitatively speaking, the London stock exchange represents by itself as much capitalization as all the exchanges of the Six put together. Qualitatively speaking, the machinery and traditions of the London *bourse* have been well tried and tested and . . . London remains an international financial centre of the first order.' Admitting that the French exchange was no longer adequate to cope with new 'transnational' business, he went on to conclude: 'In this sense the entry of London into the European Community is a capital event, not only in virtue of the strictly financial weight it brings with it—which doubles the value of the European market—but also because it will impose a European solution on the problem of financial markets by obliging us to create a central market for all European transactions.'²⁹

London's stock exchange, its banking apparatus, its huge international insurance business, its commodity and gold markets—all these furnish a ready-made primacy within the area of the Ten, which it would be odd if the British financial élite did not now exploit to the utmost. The very 'political' difficulties referred to above supply a strong additional incentive in the same direction. In this sense, the logic of entry indicates that, once in, the only valid course is *faits en avant*. Trying to soothe any banking breasts still experiencing qualms, *The Economist* told them how very 'flexible' and 'undogmatic' Europe would probably be, in pragmatic reality as distinct from political theory; all the more so, if they made their presence felt to the utmost. After all, Europe had been (the

²⁸ *How Entry into the Common Market may affect Britain's Invisible Earnings*, Committee on Invisible Exports (1971), summarized in *The Economist*, 24 July 1971, pp. 60-1.

²⁹ Interviewed in *30 Jours d'Europe*, No. 162, Jan. 1972. It is not surprising that that most aboriginal of gaullists, Christian Fouchet, should put at the head of a recent list of gloomy queries about France's destiny in the new enlarged Europe: 'Que pèsera la place financière de Paris en face de celle de Londres?' (*Le Monde*, 11 April 1972).

word of annointment) 'sensible' about the currency crisis: 'An almost British style of pragmatism now permeates Community thinking.' City critics of crass European a-priorism 'have been much reassured by the way in which the Six have chosen to deal with the latest crisis, and by their easy abandonment of the first dogmatic attempt at monetary union. By the time monetary union gets going . . . Britain will be inside. And, having the strongest financial centre in the enlarged Community, it will have a dominant say in what gets done'.³⁰ But obviously it can have that say only if it is not detached and indifferent but (with the active help of government and State) energetically present.

Two factors on the European side are likely to foster this presence. The first is that in its present state of development, financial integration is more advanced than in any other economic sector. Multinational developments in banking (in many of which London banks already participate) have been particularly intensive and far-reaching during the last two years. Thus, the area where British capital is most organized and capable is also the most immediately rewarding one in the integration process among the Ten.³¹ Secondly, since the dollar crisis there is clearly a stronger and more widespread conviction in Europe that the only possible formula for dealing with the crisis is a 'European' one. That is, a solution which will imply (in practice) the maintenance of a common European currency or unit-of-account against the dollar. This conviction lay behind the EEC decisions which re-launched the economic and monetary union plan in March 1972. In its turn, such a process of inter-government co-operation is bound to further assist the private financial sector's march towards integration.³²

Everything must change if it is to remain the same

Not only is London finance-capital well equipped to lead this march by its institutional structures and traditions; it is currently strengthening its domestic grip over the UK economy to help it in the task. In September 1971, as the grand national controversy limped towards the finishing post, the Heath government carried out a sweeping reform of banking regulations—a veritable 'banking revolution', as *The Economist* defined it. The aim of this (as of many other revolutions known to history) was 'freedom': in this particular case, total liberty for banks from the few pathetic rules which had previously hindered their activities. What

³⁰ *Economist*, 2 October and 24 July, 1971.

³¹ In *The New Europeans* (1962, revised ed. 1971) Anthony Sampson noted that 'The prophets of the promised new European unity are not so much the businessmen, as the bankers . . . For the Europe that is so far taking shape is a bankers' Europe. Their creed is not much questioned, and there is no comparable group of international trade unionists or even international socialists to criticize it.' (p. 158.)

³² This is perhaps the context in which the Heath government's apparent subservience to French leadership in 1971-2 ought to be seen. The dramatic change from Great Britain's rôle as bootblack-in-chief to the United States (especially cherished by the Labour Party leadership) to this new posture of French-style Europeanism, corresponds in some degree to this real nexus of interests. It was Germany, not Great Britain, which took up the most distinctly pro-American line in the earlier phase of the currency crisis. Heath welcomed the German retreat from that line at the Brandt-Pompidou meeting in February 1972 (Interview in *Le Monde*, 18 February), and under-wrote the March agreement on fixing parties in Europe and the formation of an EEC co-ordinating committee on economic policy.

regime would the revolution usher in? In *The Economist's* view, one where banking would have even greater control over British industry and the economy as a whole—that is, direct control through ownership and participation, rather than the indirect control it has exerted traditionally via government and the State. This may bring about in the long run a more 'Continental' pattern of economy in Britain, and is what should correspond at home to the abandonment of the older 'overseas' orientation of finance-capital, and its move into Europe. Occasions like this—which passed almost unnoticed outside the business press—reveal quite interestingly what British capitalism is really like, and how it rules. *The Economist* practically doubled up with ecstasy on the subject: 'What Britain is now doing is to set up a competitive mammon-will-reward-the-foremost banking system without any of America's anti-trust controls. The admirable new rule of jungle law opens at a time when there are a lot of hungry beasts stalking around . . . perhaps there are also rather a lot of sleepy sheep still on the pastures. There could conceivably be much blood and many astounded squeals, much redness on tooth and claw, as the hunt now starts from all sides for both new depositors and new methods of lending . . .'³³ Better still, this radical change—which 'could very well have a bigger eventual effect on British industry and British working habits than any other single economic reform since the war'—was *independent of parliamentary discussion and control*. It was scarcely mentioned in the House of Commons. 'No whit of it is parliamentary democracy . . . It has all been fixed up as a gentleman's agreement in private conclaves in the City. It would, however, be sensible if Parliament kept a watch over how it works out.' Yes of course, '*sensible*'.

It takes little effort to see how this kind of evolution in British capital's attitude towards its 'domestic' basis is related to the establishment of the new, wider basis in the Common Market. If the latter's essence economically (or part of it) is 'that big business outflanks national governments without coming under equivalent supranational control . . . obtaining freedom and wider markets, conditions which, in the competitive struggle, benefit the strong', then it is the Great-British State's duty to enter into the spirit of things.³⁴ Freedom (as one might say) is indivisible. What better way to support the City's 'say in what gets done' over the Channel than to promote the maximum of liberty and anti-restrictionism in Great Britain itself? In spite of all that has been said, by innumerable commentators ranging all the way from the Powellite right to the Communist left, on the historical gulf between the British and the 'Continental' ways of doing things, there is no real antagonism at all at this level between glorious island traditions and one aspect of the Common Market. These traditions were recently aptly defined as follows (the secret of stagnant British conservatism in a nutshell): 'The whole position and outlook derived from Britain's past has made for investment outflows together with supporting government foreign expenditures, to the detriment of the development of the domestic economy. This has meant, speaking in a rough-and-ready

³³ *Economist*, 'The Banking Revolution', 18 September 1971.

³⁴ This and the following, *Politics and Money*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (April-May 1971) pp. 22 & 25.

way, that the interests of the City have been put before the interests of industry; that is, the "parasitic" aspects of British imperialism have been intensified.' Once they have shifted their locus sufficiently, from the old one linked to the sterling zone and 'dollar imperialism', to the new one associated with European integration, these aspects will be intensified still farther. London's prominent place in the Eurodollar market may appear, then, as a 'transition from the old to its new sphere of influence.'

The Times's effort at ideological synthesis, we saw, amounted to recognizing that (in Prince Salina's words in *Il Gattopardo*): 'everything has to change a bit, if we want it all to stay as it is'. Europe represented the only concrete possibility for this kind of change. But the turning-point which Europe represents for the real dynamic of British capitalism is exactly parallel to this wish. The task of an effective ruling-class ideologist is not merely to 'reflect' existing fields of force in a static sense (which would really mean reflecting the past) but to 'sound out', to prospect a plausible future and synthesize some decent new clothes for a reality still emergent, naked, and not quite conscious of itself. Rees-Mogg did his work well, perhaps even better than he knew.

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III Conservative Europe: Mr Heath's New Horizon

'The Labour Government of 1945 . . . and Conservative Governments after them refused to join the European Community because they were still thinking in terms of Britain's history during the period of development of the nation state. Whilst the European countries concerned were moving on from the nation state because in their view it was inadequate to meet modern requirements' Edward Heath *Old World, New Horizons* (Harvard, 1967).

'"In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we now have the many-sided intercourse of nations and their mutual independence", Marx and Engels wrote in 1848. And it is only now, over 120 years later, that our politicians, realising at last the "mutual independence of nations", try in their own awkward way to create that much-vaunted European International . . . ' Isaac Deutscher, 'On Internationalism and Internationalism,' in *Marxism in Our Times* (1972).

How, upon the basis described, was ruling class unity formed *politically*? This is always the key question. Visionary castles-in-Europe of bourgeois ideology are one thing (however necessary); the material conditions of ruling-class development are another. But the most important factor is the political action which unites these two, and creates an effective hegemony.³⁵

In one sense an answer to the question has to wait: the dominance of a class over the social order is always a feature of the social order as a whole. The classes and forces which let themselves be dominated also play a part in defining the system. In this case for instance (as we shall see) the Labour Party and the left were necessary to the ruling class's success politically. Without planning to they managed to connive at their own subordination and defeat. To see how hegemony operates is, in part, to understand nation-state collusion of this kind.

As far as Conservative initiative in forming this historical moment is concerned, however, certain important facts should be borne in mind. Very recently, no more than two years ago, the Conservative Party found itself in a state of apparently serious fission. When Heath won the 1970 election, virtually all political commentators forecast storms ahead for his government. A few days after the election the *Sunday Times* published a cartoon showing that surprising new political flower Edward Heath opening his petals to the sun of victory; but up the flower-stem there crawled a hungry caterpillar with the face of Powell. The electoral campaign had been marked by angry and open quarrels between Powell and the leadership. Many people, many Conservatives—and quite certainly Powell himself—believed that he had been the

³⁵ On the subject of the Heath government's general orientation, see the important article by Robin Blackburn, 'The Heath Government: a New Course for British Capitalism' in *NLR* no. 70 (Nov.-Dec. 1971).

most potent factor in Conservative success.³⁶ Had not his powerful personality, and his long campaign of racist ultra-nationalism, been the really effective force at work determining the vote—rather than Heath's colourless manner and policies?

Weakened by this vicious internal tension, the new government confronted a number of very awkward external problems. The Common Market lay in the background at first, and remained there some time. In the front line there stood the constant deterioration of the Irish situation. The rise of the Provisional IRA and the intransigence of the provincial protestant regime in Ulster were together pushing towards war. This—the oldest and most intractable problem of British imperial politics—looked like becoming a nightmare. And in fact the rot was allowed to continue for nearly two years.

In England and Scotland the condition of the home economy was (as noted already) extremely grave. The harsh deflation practised by the Labour government (and initially continued by Heath) had produced a slump in industrial production and massive unemployment. This was occurring, furthermore, in a period of rising working-class activity—that same 'assertion of the power of the factory floor' which had so exercised Wilson when he was in office. Labour's attempt to answer the assertion had failed totally in 1969 like everything else on its programme. But the new government was committed to much sterner action on the class front. By the genteel norms of post-1945 British consensus politics, it spoke a language of fire and sword, of 'tough' class interest and aggression. Hence, it seemed certain to face an escalation of class struggle as it pursued its chosen strategy of 'reforming' industrial relations (i.e. trying to suppress 'unofficial' strikes by legal means).

In short, it looked upon a superficial view as if the Heath government confronted a unique combination of difficulties: internal feuds, and external battles likely to make the feuds worse, all under the direction of a leader despised as a nonentity by a great part of the *Conservative* press up to June 1970. Scarcely the ideal formula for class unity and political advance. Nonetheless it is a fact that against this unpromising situation the new government rapidly achieved these very things, and that its most striking success in battle was the 'great debate' about Europe. How was this accomplished?

The New Unity

The short answer is that they did so by either neutralizing or diverting attention away from the disputes and dilemmas which menaced them and the European policy was the essential instrument for doing this. It, and it alone, offered the 'way out' from the pit-falls which seemed to dominate the political landscape of 1970. It offered a valid *class* solution to the deteriorating complex of *national* problems. The cost of the

³⁶ A year later, at a dinner celebrating his 21st anniversary as MP for Wolverhampton he again assured his constituents this was so. Without him Heath would be nowhere and—he added— 'the Conservative Party knows that this is so'. (*The Times*, 8 May 1971.)

solution was, certainly, the sacrifice of some traditional baggage, the wish-bones and scarabs of an older 'Tory patriotism'. But novelty had become indispensable. And of course the Europeanist cause provided a few new ideological toys to make up for losing the old.

The essence of the formula was *mouvement* (or at least the semblance of it). Static or mechanistic analyses all too often fail to pick out this elusive key of successful political strategies. It relies upon the creation of a sense of forward motion and action, of new perspectives and conquests. When this is achieved, then even the gravest 'objective' difficulties may be confronted (or thrust to one side) relatively easily. We noticed how in 1971 certain economic preconditions had altered rapidly so as to favour a more determined 'leap forward' to Europe. The political realization of this required just such a new subjectivity within the governing élite.

Heath was greatly helped in forming it by two farther factors, one a very traditional aspect of the political ruling class, the other a matter of the conjuncture which preceded 1971. The tradition which counted was the central one of strong ruling-class unity and class consciousness. The historical conjuncture was the remarkable climate of frustration and enclosed futility generated by the six years of Labour rule from 1964 up to 1970—years in which every grand project had been still-born and even modest ambitions had come to nothing.

Little need be said here about the first of these. The British ruling class has powerful traditions of close politico-social cohesion, well grounded in the nation's social structure, echoed and safe-guarded in a large number of ways. Although the main political organ of these traditions, the Conservative Party, had lapsed into dissension while out of office, things changed as it re-assumed power. Through it, the ruling class functions more directly. The very fact of its sad lapse constituted, then, the strongest of reasons for closing ranks and re-affirming its deep instinct of unity. Commentators had become so riveted by Powell that they forgot, in their predictions of anarchy, how strong that political sense was.

The party's absolute need to move forward was compounded by the need to quickly achieve something—anything—which might contrast favourably with Labour's paralysis. Under those circumstances (one is tempted to say) almost any pretext, any specious goal or pretended triumph might have done. And in fact, the best possible one presented itself in 1971, less than a year after the election. The Conservative Party had won that election against all odds and expectations, through stubborn class sense and the weakness of its opponents. Now, the right issue emerged for rallying that class sense to the utmost and eclipsing Powell's internal challenge. Certain large-scale changes in international relations culminated (from this point of view) in the new French attitude to Britain's entry, and the Heath-Pompidou encounter in May. By swiftly capitalizing on this opportunity the Conservative ruling group was able to consolidate its grip on the party, and then—via the mechanisms of the 'great debate'—to reinforce the party's grip on the nation. Great Britain's way into Europe was, in this sense, the ruling class's way out of a hazardous political situation.

How easy it was! Powell's would-be great crusade against entry vanished in the sand. It was to have been his way of finally conquering the Tory Party; it turned into his exit-route to the margin of political life. When the lines of opposition were drawn after May, he found himself in the company of a few well-known eccentrics—the impotent, isolated fringe of the party's right wing. He had made the profound mistake of identifying the nation with his own ego (as all nationalist demagogues must do) at the very moment in which his class was forced to abandon the 'nation' in the old technicolor sense that means so much to his kind. Obsessed by the nation, he had fallen out of touch with class, and so disobeyed the fundamental law of politics.

All commentators had previously noted Powell's great appeal to the Conservative movement's local militants, its right-wing 'grass roots'. Yet the Conservative special party conference on Europe in July 1971 brought the spectacle of these very same militants—backwoods squires, retired business men, flogging colonels, flower-hatted ladies from the Women's Institutes—united in frenzied applause for Heath's historic 'success' in Brussels. There was scarcely a murmur of dissent.³⁷ A year before, how many of them had believed that Powellism was the predestined philosophy of the 1970s, the new message? In their hearts, how many of them still felt nagging doubt about the new course and pined for the Messiah from Wolverhampton? No matter: they had also felt the way the current was moving, in response to the most solid and determining interests of their class of people, and understood the need to move with it.

Consider the relationship between this movement and the two agonizing problems mentioned above, Ireland and class conflict. Rallying around the new cause with such enthusiasm could, of course do absolutely nothing to resolve the Irish question. The government had no idea at that time what to do, except send more troops and hope for the best, and it went on having no idea what to do. But the excitement, the vital sense of achievement and new horizons, the pseudo-struggle of the 'debate' on Europe—all these made it much easier to distract attention from the blood. Here too Powell had been deluded by his visionary patriot 'nation'. He imagined that the nationalist instincts of his class and party could be whipped up into support for those super-patriots, the Great-British protestants of Ulster. In fact—as the leaders of his

³⁷ Occasionally a nervous cadre would rise and ask in profoundly deferential tones whether the Prime Minister would not at least allow a 'free vote' in Parliament on the Common Market issue, for the sake of the embattled few whose 'conscience' told them to stand by island traditions. Each time some ladies from Worcestershire (seated not far from the author) exploded to their feet waving parasols and screaming: 'Sit down, y'fool, sit down! D'ye think ye can do anything y'llike in this party?' The only moment of true drama occurred when an elderly eccentric interrupted a speech (whose European bearings were not quite clear) on the need for tougher treatment of delinquents. She shouted 'Mr Heath, you are a traitor to Great Britain!', and showered some leaflets down from the gallery. There was general laughter. Some idea of the perfervid confusion of the day (14th July, as it happened) may be got from the closing remarks of the chairwoman, a Mrs Unity Lester: how suitable it was, she cried, that they should meet on the anniversary of another of Europe's great historic events, the day the Bastille fell! (Was this really the party of William Pitt and the great counter-revolutionary alliance, or was one dreaming? No one laughed at her, at any rate).

party had realized—it was possible to count on large-scale popular indifference, irritation and incomprehension about Ireland.³⁸ Once, they might well have exploited such nationalism to contain the class struggle at home. Now they were engaged upon the more awkward task of *re-defining* the ‘national interest’, and trying to give it new dimension and meaning. Finding themselves followed in this course by the overwhelming majority of their class, they could therefore afford to continue trading on such indifference and confusion—to, in effect, ignore and thrust aside the problem. In terms of the new context opening up to Conservatism, their *class* interest is quite evidently in the pacific regulation of the Irish problem in a ‘European’ or Common Market framework.

While Ireland was put to one side and allowed to fester, like a wound no longer contagious in the new and healthier conditions of the move forward into Europe, the class conflict was itself quite directly ‘contained’ by that same movement. The point of such containment is of course always *political*. That is, to stop economic and social discontents from gathering momentum until they acquire a new or dangerous political form. In 1970–1, under the tide of inflation, the discontents were bad enough. Strikes persisted at a high level, and a considerable national campaign against the proposed new Industrial Relations Act seemed to be under way that winter. In this state of semi-siege, fighting an unpopular battle against the whole working class (while the home economic scene showed no sign of improvement, and unemployment still increased), the motives for tight class unity were obvious.

What the European question provided was the perfect catalyst of such unity, subjectively. Hard-pressed, in the middle of the game, the ruling class simply changed the rules to make quite sure they stayed on top. This is part of what ‘ruling class’ signifies. If the national ‘game’ is not theirs, then whose is it? Objectively, the strategy was to work out well: the opposition was forced into playing according to these rules—that is (as will be argued below) into a political campaign which did not express and articulate, but *betrayed* the reality of the class struggle. Such a fatal confusion and diversion, in turn, provided the Heath government with vital breathing-space for the best part of a year—from the spring of 1971 until the great miners’ strike of February and March 1972, their first serious defeat.

To understand farther the machinery of what occurred we must look, next, at the position of the Labour Party during the debate; and then at the variety of stances adopted by the left outside Labour. But to some extent the outline of the drama is clear already. The ruling class put class before nation: they re-defined that old scarecrow, ‘the national interest’, to suit a renewed and changing class interest. This move forward gave it new political *élan* and a desperately needed sense of achievement and purpose. And, at the same time, it left the opposition

³⁸ Here, the estimate of ex-Tory Minister Lord Boyle was probably accurate: ‘The prevailing opinion on this side of St. George’s Channel is that Ulster Protestants are just a special kind of Irishmen, who temporarily form part of the British nation.’ *The Round Table* (January 1971), p. 135.

clinging to what was being left behind. In order to oppose, the left let itself be coerced into putting nation before class. While the Conservatives advanced to their new positions, socialism was left in occupation of the old trenches, among the fag-ends and old boots, defending 'national sovereignty'. That Powell should have been left behind playing with the wish-bones and scarabs, groaning the old songs of patriot destiny, was the appropriate humour of history, her ironic revenge on one who had stupidly and too often taken her name in vain. But that most of the left should have stood beside him, in the name of socialism and the working class, was an altogether different, and more serious, matter.

EUROPE vs AMERICA?

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IV Labour and Europe: Class and Nation

'Under slogans like 'national self-determination' there lurks all the time a twisted and limited meaning. In a society based on classes, the nation as a uniform social-political whole simply does not exist . . . There is literally no social arena—from the strongest material relationship to the most subtle moral one—in which the possessing classes and a self-conscious proletariat could take one and the same position and figure as one undifferentiated national whole.'

Rosa Luxemburg, *The Question of Nationality and Autonomy* (1908).

The paradox of the national ruling class's anti-nationalism had, we have seen, a logic of class interest behind it. This logic let it cast off the more vulgar old clothes of nationalism at the right moment, and strengthen its real grip on national society by doing so. So for it, Europeanism and the Great Debating session of 1971 played more or less coherent parts in a strategy of power.

But what of the second wing of the paradox? The Labour Party and many other movements picked up those clothes and wore them. In spite of a strong and still lively tradition of ethical internationalism and high-mindedness towards 'narrow chauvinism', Labour defended national sovereignty and 'our' absolute 'right to control our own affairs' against the great ruling-class 'sell-out'. Abandoned by the right, nationalism was embraced by the great party of the 'left'.

The surprise of this paradox seems all the greater if one thinks back a few years. It was the same party and the same leadership which, while in power, had launched Great Britain's second attempt to enter the Common Market in 1967. When de Gaulle's opposition again blocked the way, indignation was as loud among Labourists as anywhere else. Two years later, not long before the election which turned him out of office, Wilson was still saying this had been a tragedy. He looked forward eagerly to the resumption of negotiations on entry. 'If through decisions not our own we are denied entry to Europe, it will be at a high price for Britain . . . it will be at a still higher price for Europe as a whole . . . (most) tragically in terms of the continued denial of the ability of Europe to express a powerful and united voice in the councils of the world.'³⁹ This was, of course, one of the reasons why Europe was so little discussed during the 1970 election: it was at that time largely taken for granted as a policy common to all parties.

Thus, not only did Labour profess the rhetoric of a liberal-cum-

³⁹ Speech at the Guildhall, 10 November 1969. The other party leaders also spoke in favour of entry at this event, the Lord Mayor's banquet (one of the leading dates in the City's social calendar). The European Movement is said to have gained £450,000 in donations after Mr Wilson's performance. (D. Spanier, *The Times*, 13 November, 1970). In later anti-Market attacks upon the sinister sources of the Movement's funds, this fact seems to have been mercifully overlooked.

socialist 'internationalism', it seemed committed to a concrete policy giving some (however limited) effect to these ideas. Yet from late 1970 onwards it withdrew from this 'bi-partisan' policy, slowly at first, then (during the period of the debate) with greater decisiveness. This movement of opinion and feeling in the party was strong enough to force Wilson himself and many other prominent leaders into following it. It gathered momentum until clear majorities of the mass membership, the leadership, and the parliamentary group were on 'anti-Market' positions and opposition to entry became official policy. And finally, in 1972, it went even as far as majority demands for a referendum on the question, although such a referendum has no place as a device of government in the British Constitution—and hitherto no party had outdone Labour in reverence for this nation-state totem. For Labourism—one must conclude—there was something in this movement more important than consistency, logic, party unity, or even the Constitution. What was it?

The question is only underlined by the fact that one sector of Labour opinion did not let itself be carried away on the tide. An important part of the leadership, led by Roy Jenkins and George Thompson and accounting (on some votes) for as much as a third of the parliamentary group, refused to abandon its 'pro-Market' stance. It would carry intransigence to the point of voting against the will of the majority (on 28 October) and, eventually, resigning from positions in the leadership when the referendum issue arose in April 1972. This split was immediately seen as the most serious in the Labour Party since the Bevanite turbulence of the 1950s. So, the same period of time that saw a powerful impulse of unity and consolidation at work in the Conservative Party, saw an almost equally powerful trend towards crisis and disruption at work inside Labourism. And yet the latter was supposed to be an 'answer' to the former.

The Jenkins-Thompson faction, in itself, presents no special problems here. Their ideas are similar to those of other pro-European social democrats and liberals on the Continent in simply following the new orientation of the ruling class.⁴⁰ Is this not what one expects social democrats and liberal reformers to do on the whole? Many simplistic theories about Labourism have indeed stated that this is all it amounts to: a second-rate 'alternative' mode of government for capitalism, useful in crises, inevitably subservient to the *general* class interests of the rulers. But if this were the whole truth, Labour would obviously never have abandoned Wilson's old bi-partisan approach. There would never have been a split on the issue—still less one where the great majority pursued what must (in these simplistic terms) be held the 'illogical' position and only a right-wing minority clung to the more principled lackeyism which had grasped the probable course of events and so could imagine a plausible future for itself. Labourism is not so simple.

⁴⁰ For a fuller statement of this point of view, see *Socialist Commentary*, August 1971, Alan Day, 'Socialists and European Unity', and September 1971, G. Thomson 'Socialism, Schisms, and the Common Market.' Perhaps the best statement of the group's economic position is D. Taveme, *Monetary and Economic Union in Europe* (1971).

Labour Nationalism

The novel political conjuncture was to provide, in fact, a revelation of Labour's much more complex function in the nation-state totality. The novelty suddenly precipitated by Heath's success at Brussels and its effects was just sufficient to—so to speak—prize things a little out of their customary mould; so it became more possible to see what that 'mould' consists of. As yet the real new developments implicit in this change are merely embryonic. The inertia of national habits so long enclosed in a circle of slow decline is very great. But even the first premonitory signs of a break with continuity have produced some interesting consequences.

Perhaps the most useful reference point for understanding the effects upon the Labour Party is certain events of 10 years ago, which (in retrospect) seem like a curtain-raiser to the drama of 1971. Then too the party was in opposition. It was also in serious trouble internally: for three years (1959 to 1962) there had been bitter and disruptive disputes about nuclear disarmament and Gaitskell's proposed revision of the party constitution. On a more theoretical plane the right-wing revisionists led by Anthony Crosland had clashed with both old and new lefts, in the long effort to find some way out of the stalemate which had fallen upon the movement after 1950. For the first time since before the war a mass movement, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, had offered some threat to Labour's hegemony from outside. The right-wing leaders had won over the nuclear question; the left had won a more ambiguous victory over the question of revising the constitution. But in 1962 it did not look at all as if the trouble was over: Gaitskell and his group were still regarded as traitors by the left, and the left as 'fundamentalist' (i.e. behind-the-times) trouble-makers by the right.

Yet it was in 1962 that Gaitskell was able to rally the party behind him in the most remarkable fashion. He was able, for the first time in many years, to forge a genuine sentiment of unity and purpose. This surmounted to some extent the stale, entrenched divisions in the party, and prepared the way for the enthusiasm and unity that were to accompany Wilson on his way to power in 1963 and 1964. Gaitskell himself died not long after the crucial party conference of 1962. But not before he had performed a vitally important service to the movement. How had he contrived to unite it so well, in such unpromising circumstances? The previous year the Macmillan Conservative government had made Britain's first application to join the Common Market. At first this question had simply added to the number of disagreements in the party. Then as now, while a significant sector of opinion remained stubbornly pro-European, a majority moved over to the anti-Market position. Popular on the left, this position was backed by the party's National Executive Committee in an eve-of-conference statement. The point of the latter was that Great Britain could still 'go it alone'; 'The prosperity of Britain rests far more on our ability to make intelligent use of our economic resources than it does on securing tariff-free access to the Six.'⁴¹ This was the statement which Gaitskell rose to defend at that year's conference in Brighton.

⁴¹NBC statement, 29 September, 1962, quoted in *The Second Try: Labour and the EEC* (1968), ed. U. Kitzinger.

His speech was almost universally regarded as epoch-making. It welded the left and right wings together in a moment of emotional fervour, of reconciliation. The theme was simple: hostile opposition to the Common Market, and confidence in the British nation.⁴² Consider the longer sequence of events: for years the movement had been torn apart about internationalism and socialism, and its dilemmas in that direction seemed insurmountable. Yet Gaitskell did transcend them, by cleverly seizing on the new issue represented by Europe. Clearly he could do this only by touching on certain more fundamental chords which the different sides in the old disputes shared—on a bed-rock, something even more vital to Labourism than the Bomb and Clause 4. There can be no doubt that bed-rock was: nationalism. Much needs to be said on the equivocations of this term, and (in particular) on the logic of its use which forced even Gaitskell to vest it with so much 'internationalist' or 'wide world' camouflage. But in general his technique and formula were both shamelessly simple and devastatingly effective: tear-jerking patriotism and invocation of the imperial relics.

Thus, unable to agree about socialism, Labour could re-establish harmony over nationalism. Even though a significant pro-Europe minority dissented from Gaitskell's views in 1962, this division was (or seemed then) less serious and crippling than the older ones—less part of the movement's essence, as it were. This indicates, surely, that in the real composition of that essence the nation was more important than 'socialism'. Out of office, suffering from various crises, uncertain how to advance politically, the party could nevertheless fall back upon it. It could rediscover its nationalism, in an appropriate form—and with what striking results! The 1962 Conference chairman, Harold Wilson MP, must have learned much from what happened.⁴³

Five years later Mr Wilson's government was itself applying for membership of the Common Market. His national technological revolution had come and gone again, without ever touching the ground. The great Labour National Plan to put the British house in order had evaporated without trace, and the nation was on its knees. But even the attempt to save matters by getting into Europe failed. Eight years later, after devaluation and rigid deflation, the nation was flat on its back, consoled in ignominy only by fetishistic contemplation of its balance-of-payments surplus. Devoid of real achievements Wilson had no choice but to present himself to the electorate as the guardian of order: Labour's national revolution of 1964 carried it to a stance of dismal conservatism in 1970—'conservatism' in the simplest, meanest sense of preserving a wretched *status quo* for fear of something worse.⁴⁴

⁴² A larger analysis of this speech and the reactions to it was given in T. Naim, 'British Nationalism and the NEC', *NLR* 69 (September–October 1971).

⁴³ His memoirs have not yet extended so far back. But it is hard to believe such events did not deeply impress a visionless sub-Machiavel like Wilson.

⁴⁴ This incredible climate of only two years ago was mirrored to perfection in the *New Statesman's* election issue (19 June 1970). The editor, Paul Johnson, urged his readers to vote Labour exclusively as a 'guarantee of this country's internal stability and security... an absolute and cast-iron defence against adventurism'. The adventurist was of course Powell: his was 'the ugly spirit which is being nourished in

After this extraordinary *débâcle*, the Labour Party again found itself in opposition. Again, it was in political stalemate with no convincing vision of progress. Having successively failed as the party of socialist renovation *and* as the party of national stability and anti-adventurism its problems of political orientation were—to say the least of it—profound. Again, its problematic condition was interrupted by a Conservative government's attempt to get into Europe—this time much more determinedly and successfully. And once more Labour reacted to this set of circumstances by resorting to nationalism—by vociferously identifying itself with the 'nation', so to speak, and posing as true defender of the 'national interest' betrayed by the ruling class.

The point is not that the political melodrama of 1971 was identical to that of 1961–2 and merely repeated the same political *motifs*. On the contrary, profound changes had occurred in the decade between, which gave it quite a different (and from a Labourist point of view, more ominous) sense. We shall look at these differences later. But for the moment, it is the coincidence of patterns which imposes itself and indicates the way forward: under certain conditions, the Labour Party stands forth in its true colours as a party of the nation and the (pretended) 'national interest' rather than anything else. What are these 'true colours'?

Class and Nation

The paradox of the question arises, naturally, from Labourism's claim to be something else: the party of a class. Is it primarily the political movement of the working class, or of the nation 'as a whole'? In a superficial sense the answer is of course 'both'. In just that sense, the official apologetics of Labourism have always held that there is no contradiction between being a class party and being a national party: the real interests of the class are essentially one with those of the nation. That is, society (in Britain at least) is essentially harmony, not conflict and contradiction, and politics the mechanics of this harmony. Labour's purpose in such a system is to give a democratic or popular inflection to the national being, to incline national interest in the direction of a majority class interest. Far from destroying the nation, this is guaranteed to improve its health.

But what a wealth of ambiguities lies in this answer! Labourism is really the history of this ambiguity, which we must try and unravel farther in order to understand its attitudes to Europe. Consider at greater length each of the two dimensions of Labour's being.

Britain . . . of unreason and violence'. As against this sort of thing, Labourism meant the traditional, civilized 'way we manage our affairs'. It meant Parliament and Constitution: 'To look down from the galleries on to a crowded House of Commons is to me a moving spectacle . . . It is the solid ranks of Labour men and women, sitting behind their ministers, which is to me ocular and indisputable proof that . . . somewhere in a chaotic world there will still be a major nation, of great influence and potentiality, to uphold civilized principles. This is the moral issue for the election.' Labour now stood for 'the steadiness of the great majority of ordinary people' (i.e. their conservative instincts) in this fortunate 'island of comparative calm' (i.e. of morgue-like stability where next to nothing had happened for a quarter of a century)—and so on. Mr Johnson did not find it necessary to insert a single word about what Labour would or should do, if returned to power.

Its characteristics as a class party are undeniable, and too well known to need more than a brief reference here.⁴³ It contains most of the trade unions within its federal organization, and relies on them for money. Its mass membership is working class, and most of its voting support is working class. Its very name is working class, reflecting those origins early in the century when it was indeed little more than the attempted 'independent' political expression of the trade unions in parliament.

Labour's 'national' dimension, on the other hand, is indicated by the fact that when in power it has invariably behaved like a national party. That is, it has consistently (and quite consciously) transcended its class character in honour of the national interest. The average Labour leader or minister (who is from an intellectual bourgeois background) is equipped with an average speech—the anthem of Labourism—where it is stressed that Labour is not the party of a 'sectional interest' but the *true* representative of the nation-as-a-whole against the 'sectional interest' of the rich and mighty. As such, is his party not equally competent (nay, more competent!) to govern in the national interest? Of course such nationalist emphasis may be seen as itself betraying uneasy consciousness of the movement's ineradicable class and sectional nature; it is necessary to insist constantly that Labour is not what it seems to be. In rather the same way, Labourist infatuation with parliament and constitution can be seen as arising from the need to be *plus royaliste que le Roi*. The Labour Party lays constant claim to the national essence, the Holy Ghost of Great Britain. We have the right to commingle our being with hers, they seem to say; we have as much right to her as anybody else; she ought to be ours every other day at least.

Take only one example of what this has meant in practice. Towards the end of his recent six-year reign—as we saw—Wilson had cast off progressively every last shred of political purpose and decency. His despicable government ended up as executor of the most traditional and conservative of economic policies, policies which may indeed have been 'national' in the ancestral-ghost sense (i.e. in the interests of finance capital) but had little to do with the real interests of the party's class basis. However, the emperor was not naked even then—not by any means. Underneath the political cast-offs, the soiled robes of great purpose, there lay a stout suit of national underwear. It was all Wilson had to wear. Yet he could wear it with such an air of wise authority and paternal-cum-national responsibility that (the most significant point)

⁴³ The clearest acknowledgement of this class nature comes from the marxist left. Marxists have rarely denied that Labourism is *primarily* the expression of the British proletariat, and has therefore (to that extent) to be supported. The most striking testimony to the stubbornness of this view was the 1970 election when—even after six years of bankruptcy and regression—the marxist parties still mostly urged their *cadres* to vote Labour again. The inevitable corollaries to this theory are of course (i) that since Labour never *acts* like a class party, like what it *is*, this is because it is betrayed all the time by the leadership, and (ii) such betrayal is possible only because of the 'backwardness' of the workers, their lack of political understanding, limited horizons, etc. The conclusion of the syllogism can only be (iii) that one should carry on trying to enlighten the workers through Labourism, voting support for it *in the meanwhile* (as 'patient education of the mass' proceeds etc).

the nation almost *was* convinced.⁴⁶ In action—in political reality as distinct from myth—the Labour Party has always been able to disregard and trample on its popular ‘class’ support—to treat its own real basis as unreal. But it can never for a single instant disregard the nation, the spirit-whore: when everything else fails, she is always there to fall back upon. In the end, a semblance of marriage to her is the only thing which counts—this unreality is, politically speaking, the key and enduring reality.

Hence, these two dimensions of the Labour being are certainly not equal. The ambiguity of Labourism does not enfold two equivalent poles, or modes of existence. It consists rather of the intimate subordination of one to the other. It stands not for class and nation—this is the ideological halo—but for class-in-nation; or more exactly, for nation-over-class. Labour is (to employ one of its own historic programme-words in a different sense) the *nationalization* of class. What it represents is not the class, in a sociological sense—the raw or material social reality of class—but the class *as* seduced by the nation. Sociologically, to a static or mechanical view of things, class may appear its essence. Politically, to a view which seeks the active and mutant nature of things, the nation is obviously more important. The Labour Party’s real basis may be a popular and proletarian mass; but a *political* movement, surely, is what it does—and what Labourism does is to translate that real mass into terms of the nation, to spiritualize it into the ‘national interest’. By enshrining the real in the unreal, it allows the unreal to govern the real—and hence, allows the real power behind that unreality, the profane secret of capital, to maintain its grip.

Mass and Leadership

This is not the place to try and trace in detail the mechanics of this alienation. However, one or two remarks on it are necessary to the argument that follows. It does not mean, for instance, that Labour’s political *modus operandi* is one of constantly reiterated or blatant chauvinism. On the contrary, the English mode of relationship between state and society prescribes that the nation be ‘taken for granted’ most of the time: usually it ought to have the repressed, almost underground tonality of English romantic music, felt more than heard. It is only in emergencies that this low-key dignity turns into the Union Jack, into that distinctly *cocardier* note which for example, Gaitskell, evoked in 1962. In particular, emergencies where the nation has to be *defended*: it is defence which reconciles nationalism with the moral imperative of English civil society and so legitimates it, letting it emerge with a

⁴⁶ It may have been forgotten how profound was the impression produced by Wilson’s charade of 1969–70. Even many conservative writers and commentators could not help feeling, for a time, that perhaps indeed Labour *was* the new ‘ruling party’, the ‘normal’ party, the establishment. That doyen of Tory journalism Peregrine Worsthorne, for example, asked ‘Who Are Our Masters Now?’ (*Sunday Telegraph*, 30 April 1970), and concluded dolefully: ‘There has been a reversal of roles . . . it is Labour men who now seem accustomed to the exercise of power, at least relatively, and Tory measures that strike the public as radical and disturbing’. Hence the Tories are bound to lose the next election. (They won, in fact, because many workers did not believe in the Wilson Apotheosis and many solid bourgeois did not believe their own political commentators.)

strength all the more striking because of the normal repression. It is wrong to conclude from the 'episodic' appearance of such left-wing nationalism that it is simply a transient malady—a deviation from the healthy norm. Such episodes of crisis ought rather to be seen as defining the true norm—the inner nature so often concealed by the opacity of everyday routine and inert customs.

The Labour Party mediates class and nation in virtue of certain internal characteristics—characteristics that have a distinct bearing upon the formulation of its outlook on Europe. The most important of these is clearly the relationship between the party's leadership and hierarchy, and its mass following. It is wrong to conceive of this as primarily a class-political relationship—that is, a stubborn belief that Labour serves the interests of the working class, that it is 'ours' as distinct from 'theirs', and so on. If this was all there was to it, there would really be no alternative to concluding that around half the population of the country consisted of irredeemable idiots.⁴⁷ How else could the movement have survived its innumerable fiascos and outrageous betrayals of working-class interests, never mind the prolonged calamity of 1964 to 1970? In reality belief in Labourism does not stand alone, in a fashion which would let it be rationally regarded, 'tested' or 'disproved' in this way. It is associated at the deepest level with something else, something positive and far more powerful—the true nerve of the relationship in question. This is, of course, belief in the nation, in British society or 'the British way', with its habitual accoutrements of parliament, constitution, monarchy, a certain national-political style of conduct and leadership, and so on. The 'faith' which has proved so unshakable is faith in Labourism as one integral part of this larger magic ensemble—as the only 'practicable' or possible form of class action in relation to it.⁴⁸ It is exactly upon this nerve that the Labour leadership has to press, when real trouble threatens. When crisis forces the leaders to summon up the true party spirit, the sacred inner flame of unity stronger than 'our many quarrels', this turns out to be no stranger: what is it but the great nation, self-conscious in a cloth cap? The party did not overcome its lacerations of the later 1950s, or resist its humiliations of the later 1960s, or rally its forces in 1971, by evoking issues of class, or a strengthened class-consciousness. Just the opposite: each time it fell back upon its love-affair with the nation. The various *motifs* of this

⁴⁷ As, in effect, do those Marxists who stick to the theory mentioned above and 'explain' Labourism in terms of mass 'backwardness', 'limitations', and other negative categories. The lonely merit of such an explanation is that it enables those who have made the diagnosis to present themselves in salvationist style as bearers of the cure (i.e. doses of guaranteed pure concentrate of 'class consciousness').

⁴⁸ This popular belief has a merit which critics have been naturally reluctant to concede: that of being true. So far from being incorrigible 'backwardness' or blindness, the idea of Labourism's validity and inevitability is in itself perfectly rational—as long as the national-state structure it leans upon and feeds off is taken for granted. From the beginning Labourism assumed the character of a carefully sought symbiosis with that structure—(see, e.g. Ralph Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism*, 1961, new revised ed. 1972). Within this subordination of class to nation, the locus of illusion is the latter, not the former, category. If one accepts the nation (as nearly all Labour militants and voters have done) then Labourism is never 'betrayal' at bottom—however much it betrays!—but a reasonable compromise which often disappoints yet upholds the larger (national-religious) truth.

(hopefully not endless) romance were gone through again in the great debate: national sovereignty, the defence of 'our democracy', 'general election *now*!', the Constitution, foreign anarchy, 'where is your *mandate*!', the prerogatives of parliament, etc, etc.

In short, the mediating bond between the party as a whole and the nation-state is the same as that between the party direction and its mass following. Political homogeneity in this way transcends the diversity of civil society, its class heterogeneity. Labourism constitutes, perhaps, the most important element in this astonishing homogeneity of modern Britain. In effect, the most dangerous seam of civil society, the division between the classes, runs through it rather than outside it and is constantly 'healed' politically (i.e. kept closed) by the very structure and world-view of the party. It is in this perspective that the perennial 'problem' of the party's bourgeois leadership must be seen. One finds in the movement's history and daily life a constant puzzlement—which often turns into indignation, and then to vulgar anti-intellectualism—that such a densely working-class entity should be so entirely dominated by a 'middle-class' leading group. But what matters about them is not that they come from a bourgeois background. For obvious reasons modern worker parties are almost bound to have bourgeois intellectuals in their leadership. Whether they turn out to be like Rosa Luxemburg or like Roy Jenkins is determined by a great variety of factors. The Labour intellectual leadership, however, has since the 1920s clearly been a *national* formation—consisting not simply of middle-class brains but of an intelligentsia formed in the most traditional and conservative way, products of the ancient universities and schools.⁴⁹ This is why it has been accepted—indeed, most of the time actively encouraged, save when a little anti-intellectualism was in order to bolster morale—by the party's great proletarian pillars, the trade union chiefs. Attlee, Gaitskell, Dalton, Wilson *et al.* were not supported because they were 'middle class', but because of their 'know-how', their complex of capacities for political leadership. 'Know-how' in this sense is not theoretical ability, charismatic magnetism, or Borgia-like political cunning—still less of course is its closeness to the people, familiarity with their traditions, and so on. It is, rather, familiarity with the national essence—the practical knowledge of how 'things are done', how they are said, how authority is won and kept, the speech and habits of a national governing *élite*. It is the nation—here as elsewhere—which works across and through apparent class heterogeneity to establish an underlying unity.

⁴⁹ The point is often obscured by the obsessive English tendency to scrutinise society exclusively in terms of 'class', rather than in terms of 'nation'—sociologically, as it were, rather than politically, from the point of view of civil society rather than of the State and the totality. 'Class' in this sense is in reality the inwardness, the false self-consciousness, of the *national* being. How else explain that a society so politically united, and from the outside so much at one, yet appears to itself as incorrigibly divided? 'Class' in the sense which rides the English intelligentsia so hard is a conservative and national folk-category with (often) a Marxist coloration. The neurotic-obsessive side of the preoccupation arises from the impossibility of achieving personal or cultural liberation from 'class', thus determined, within its given national framework.

Left and Right

This process by which internal party hegemony reproduces national hegemony bears directly upon the main 'political' distinction inside Labourism: that is, the division between 'left' and 'right'. There is a good deal in the language and orthodox rhetoric of the Labour-left which seems to mark it out as more definitely the political voice of class than the party at large. It represents the ideological 'soul' of the movement, its emotion and enthusiasm, as against the grey moderation of the right-wing leadership. It stands for the movement's socialist impulse, the fervour of an essentially popular ethico-religious tradition. And the impression is sometimes strengthened by its adoption of a vaguely *marxist* terminology where the class struggle figures prominently in at least a verbal sense.

Yet this impression is misleading. The Labour-left almost never stands for class *against* nation, for that material reality of which Labourism is the mystical shell. Were it so, the Labour Party could not exist in its actual form, and would certainly never have survived its trials of the past 20 years without a serious split. In its own way the left wing forms an integral part of the 'mystical shell', of Labour's system of estrangement. Moreover its function is arguably in the last resort more important than any other—if only because, in all mass or popular politics, 'soul' or political vision and enthusiasm must be the heart of the matter. How is this socialist 'soul' related to the nation and the State?

Labourism as a whole—as we noticed—aspires to mystic marriage with the nation, and does so via a leadership homogeneous with the traditions of the ruling class, through a solution of continuity with the particular form assumed by bourgeois hegemony in Great Britain. This of course entails the familiar grovelling self-abasement of Labour leaders before national idols, the lickspittle veneration of every old ruling-class memento and pug-mark. But nationalism has still other depths than this to fall back upon. It is a part of every self-respecting nation-state spirit to have a popular dimension, a mass psychology to some degree independent of the existing nation-state institutions and 'higher' culture. The most rooted conviction of this popular nationalism is often that it, and it alone, represents the *true* nation—the enduring, uncorrupted national soul which has constantly to stand up against betrayal from above. This national sentiment is capable of being more or less 'socialist', or at least egalitarian, and of rejecting (or at least viewing critically) the kind of high-church Establishment ritualism which the Labour right favours. But it does so necessarily from a still 'national' point of view, not a class one: from the angle of the social, workers' nation as it were, rather than the politico-legal nation that has fallen too much under the influence of the wrong people.

Just what degree of opposition such popular nationalism can offer to more official brands depends on many different factors. It depends, for example, upon the character of popular political traditions and their relationship to the history of the nation—that is, upon the role played by 'the people', the masses, in this particular history, and how they remember that role. But what does popular nationalism remember in

Great Britain, in this sense? It remembers a prolonged and crushing *class* defeat, and many *national* triumphs. It bears with it as tradition a multiform bodily reaction to that defeat—the profound subjective adaptation corresponding to the *Christian* nature of the British left. This reaction, in turn, has been enfolded by a number of great nationalist victories.

These victorious pressures were those of the most successful nation-state of the 19th century, which went from its triumph over the French Revolution and Napoleon—an experience coinciding with the infancy of the new class—to the imperialist hegemony of 1880–1914. Not only the oldest and most settled of Europe's national entities, therefore, but one that grew in power and national self-consciousness throughout the period of the working class's political formation. It was impossible in these circumstances that such a new social stratum should not be 'nationalized' at a profound level.

From the 1820s to the 1840s, and again in the stormy period before 1914, radical movements combining strong class sense and internationalism did challenge the mainstream represented (eventually) by the Labour Party. But such challenges were unequal to the great historical forces arrayed against them. Class contestation cannot be eliminated even by all-conquering nationalism; however it can be 'contained' or neutralized over considerable periods of time. In Great Britain, the ideology available for this long defensive war of containment was naturally a Christian one. Just as in France Jacobinism constituted the main popular inheritance of revolutionary attitudes, so in England this lasting inheritance was a dissident Christianity. England's own revolution had been a religious one, preceding the Enlightenment, and militant protestantism had long been the principal tradition of opposition and protest within bourgeois society—'the great spring of political life in England', as the liberal philosopher T. H. Green called it.⁵⁰

The new urban masses were forced therefore to adapt to the nation-state in two ways: positively, in the form of a deep acceptance of nationalism, and negatively in the form of the only available code of resistance and protest against this fate. The 'great spring' of ethical conscience, that profound moralism 'nursed in antagonism to the powers of this world' ever since the revolutions, established new roots in the social conditions of another century. Now, the powers of this world were represented by the omnipotent bourgeois nation in its march towards imperialism and war—by the new national leviathan which encompassed both State and Church, and sucked all social forces into its service. Antagonism to these powers lay in the negative, stubborn demand of conscience for what Green called 'an outward world, a system of law, custom, and ordinance, answering to itself'. Originally

⁵⁰ T. H. Green, *Works* (1885–8), vol. III, 'Lectures on the English Revolution'. See also Elie Halévy, *Histoire du peuple anglais au XIX^e siècle*, vol. I; *The Birth of Methodism in England* (1971), ed. Semmel, with a long introduction describing the history of the 'Halévy thesis' at the hands of its critics. See also T. Naim 'The English Working Class' in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed. R. Blackburn (1972).

this outward world had been the kingdom of Christ; it became socialism—that famous ‘British Socialism’, at once Christian and national, which has always been recognized as the peculiar property of Labourism.

It is precisely this dialectic of nationalism and Christianity which one finds animating the left-wing ‘soul’ of Labourism. It stands for the true nation, against the consistent betrayal and corruption of the powers of the world—the ‘official’ nation of State and ruling elite. It expresses that unquiet and resolute conscience—perpetually disappointed by the world, yet perpetually resurgent against defeat in virtue of its very other-worldliness—which has always been the ‘left’ horizon of the English bourgeois *Weltanschauung*.⁵¹ The true or real nation, in other words, is a Christian inwardness. This is what the proletariat is heir to. Wherever it ventures outside corporate class existence to seek political existence, this is the soul that guides it. While Labour’s right wing surrenders to the way of the world, its left wing remains true to the way of the spirit. The former is the nation of Mammon and force, of capitalism and the State; the latter is the nation of spiritual equality and community, of commanding moral principle and righteous example.

The way in which the left’s subordination is confirmed by the right-left division can now be seen. For just as ‘class’ and ‘nation’ are not *equal* dimensions of Labour’s being, which the party balances against each other in its policies, so the ideological forces of nationalism and Christianity are never equal in effect. The Christian soul cannot really counter-balance the nation-state in these political scales. Like its ‘class character’, this is a pious delusion essential to the specific alienation which Labourism represents. To function as the instrument of national class repression, it has to appear an organ of class, and to appear soulful sometimes.

Labour’s Soul

The true contrast between Labour’s devotion to the nation and its Christianity is between an extremely potent ideal force and a very feeble one. The ethical soul is undeniably a resistant phenomenon, but such resistance and adaptability arise from its very abstraction, from its capacity to be many different things to the different historical classes of the world. Its longevity, its great appeal to successive strata of English civil society, comes out of its incomparable character as a vehicle of political defeat: its power to clothe the inwardness of withdrawal and retreat with a spiritual will, an emotional aspiration for a *renaissance* of the righteous—a kind of moral dignity never quite eclipsed by the sentimentalism and rhetoric. Yet the form of such a world-view confirms defeat and subordination even as it voices the perennial wish to escape from that condition: it underwrites the tragic reality, by the very ‘ideal’

⁵¹ At the July 1971 Labour conference on Europe, a moment for invoking past heroes if ever there was one, only one was in fact invoked. Michael Foot, the present parliamentary leader of the Labour left, referred to the Puritan hero of the 1630s, John Hampden, as representing the appropriate spirit of the anti-Market battle. The same spirit has, of course, informed Mr Foot’s passionate defence of parliament and the British Constitution against the European ‘sell-out’.

fashion of its reaction to that reality. Its 'religious' nature (laicized as 'ethical socialism' or not) consigns reality to the way of the world, by the very way in which it conceives that reality and itself—exactly as, in the Labour Party's historical *praxis* the left has consigned power to the right, not accidentally but inevitably. It could not wield power, and remain itself. Its political function is to protest, and remind power of the ideal (the beyond) which it should serve and not betray. By performing this moral function, it provides power with an indispensable alibi, with the aroma of vision and ideology it needs to go on exercising any political spell.

The nation, on the other hand, the 'national interest' which alone gives focus and structure to the right-wing leadership's pragmatism, represents a very strong and concrete ideal force. It stands for Great Britain's victory over the French Revolution and Napoleon, for the prolonged social and political counter-revolution which accompanied industrialization, for the defeat of Chartism, for the popular imperialism of 1900 . . . for the whole complex of ideas and institutions that found expression, for example, in Gaitskell's litany of 1962, culminating in '1940' and 'Commonwealth'. Nationalism in Great Britain is so heavily weighed down by bourgeois triumphs that nothing else has a chance *in practice*. It is so massively conservative that all opposition to it which stays couched in national terms is doomed from the outset. But this is exactly the dilemma of the Labour-left's opposition. It opposes the right not in the name of a class but in the name of the true nation, the good old cause; under pressure, however, this highly principled soul speedily collapses into the mere nation, the nationality everyone knows from history-books. One begins by defending British socialism; before the audience can draw breath, one is defending the sacred prerogatives of Parliament, national sovereignty, the Constitution, 1940, decent British imperialism, and all the rest. The ghostly form of the Christian nation comes down to earth under stress. But the earth is crass bourgeois nationalism. What else could it be? The nation of the Saints was swept away forever in 1660, at the very dawn of modern political times, too long ago to be employed effectively even by a Michael Foot. And disasters like 1926 or 1848 can hardly be the source of a valid counter-myth of the nation.

So, one may say that while Labour seems (and indeed must seem) to stand for class against nation, it represents in reality the ascendancy of nation and the State over class. In analogous fashion, while at a deeper level the left seems to oppose the right-wing leadership in the name of class socialism, in reality it too sustains that leadership—and so, in its own particular way, the nation and the State.⁵² The whole structure of

⁵² This is why that traditional marxist interpretation of Labourism referred to above (n. 45) must be mistrusted—and why it is surprising that marxists took it seriously for so long. The 'betrayal' which is crucial to the theory is, of course, a structural fact, and not a moral problem (i.e. a problem of rotten leaders, replacing them with sounder stuff, roundly denouncing them, etc). The Labour Party is national to the core, not rotten to the core. It suffers from excess of healthy patriotism, not the leadership of degenerate swine; it is hopelessly national, not led by hopeless traitors. More generally, the character of Labourism is such that study of the way it hangs together is only with difficulty separable from wider sociological problem of consensus—a subject on which, as one recent writer comments, 'Present sociological

the movement represents a complex estrangement of 'class' by 'nation': a process through which a class *both* affirms its own being politically *and* consistently loses that being by the very way in which the affirmation is made—via the deep-rooted national-political 'rules' secreted after a long conservative history. The political affirmation of a social class within a nation-state framework *is* the nationalization of that class. How could it be otherwise? The European-based nation-state is easily the strongest socio-political structure known to history, and the popular classes of modern industrial society were forced to grow up into that structure. It pre-existed them, and went on during the era of their formation to attain the imperialist apogee of its strength. The class struggle therefore assumed that extremely unequal form which is (so to speak) registered in the character of Labourism, as of many other working-class and socialist institutions in Europe.

writings offer no coherent answer'. Speaking of the working class, the author remarks in the same valuable article: 'For the reason why working-class people do "accept" (in whatever sense) their lot and do not have consistent deviant ideologies, we must look back to the historical incorporation of working-class political and industrial movements in the 19th and 20th centuries within existing structures.' Michael Mann, 'The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 35 No. 3 (June 1970).

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Isaac Deutscher, 'On Internationalism and Internationalism'
Marxism in Our Times (1972).

Labour mediates class and nation by imposing the primacy of the nation. Yet it does so in a way which (verbally at least) is strikingly at odds with this historic role. Both in 1962 and in 1971 one of the most prominent features of Labour's defence of the nation against the Common Market was a strongly professed *internationalism*. What is the real sense of this paradoxical rhetoric? How is such 'internationalism' related in function to the Labour Party's evident place as a pillar of the national scheme of things? These questions are not only important for an understanding of Labour's 1971 gyrations—they indicate something of the real complexity which may attach to the apparently simple notion of 'internationalism.'

Gaitskell could find no more effective way to end his 1962 speech than by denouncing 'narrow nationalism' in Europe. In other words the Common Market countries groping towards some new transnational entity were by definition condemned to nationalism—while Great Britain, busy guarding her national sovereignty against the process, was somehow intrinsically 'international' in nature and outlook. That was the point of his eulogy of the Commonwealth, and the 'ties and links which run across the whole world'. They signified a different, un-narrow, wide-world destiny—a generous and moral universalism, as it were, untainted by continental egoism and mere self-interest.

Ten years later the theme was being pressed more strongly than ever. In June 1971, for instance, *Tribune* produced a special Common Market issue where the editor Richard Clements wrote: '*Tribune* has explained all through the years why we believe that the consequences of entry into the EEC will be disastrous for Britain and damaging to the concept of a wider co-operation among all the nations of the world, both developed and under-developed.' He saw the two things as quite naturally united. A few weeks later *Tribune* published an article by the left-Labour MP F. Judd called 'Phoney Internationalism: That's the Common Market Policy towards Under-Developed Nations'. What then is real, non-phoney internationalism? 'It is the convictions and the will of those who lead them which provide the substance of . . . living communities,' wrote Mr Judd, 'just as I fear for the future of creative, participant democracy in the prevailing atmosphere of paternalistic Western European politics, so I fear that, despite the protests of sincere and well-meaning colleagues in our party, the main driving-force for EEC enlargement is an old-fashioned and frustrated nationalism as irrelevant to the age in which we live as it is possible to be.' And he goes on to

contrast the 'narrow regional integration' of the Common Market with wider and 'more meaningful international forums such as OECD, GATT and UNCTAD, or the multi-racial, intercontinental and realistically heterogeneous groupings of both the new Commonwealth and the United Nations itself'.³³

What is the cause of the disgraceful nationalism of Europe? One did not have to look far in any of the Labourist perorations of 1971 for the answer: France. Behind the Cobdenite rhetoric there rankled an ancient national rivalry. The Common Market is dominated by France, and the French are narrow nationalists. The most vociferous exponent of this view, Peter Shore, denounced entry as a French plot, 'a victory for France . . . and a great defeat for us'. In a *New Statesman* article 'Into the French Trap' (11 June 1971), he emphasized the 'full and ruinous contribution . . . the immense cash payment' which the Heath government had been lured into making. Cunnilingus the Frenchman spent many years elaborating this ruse, as a result of which the British taxpayer will have to subsidize his poor peasantry. 'It speaks volumes about the French meaning of a "Community"', concluded Mr Shore, 'and gives some indication of the "Community Spirit" that we could expect to meet on other problems if we became a member, that they should prepare this trap for Britain even before the negotiations began.'

Great Britain, on the other hand, is the world authority on community spirit. Its inner harmony demonstrates this expertise, as does its history of charity abroad. Great Britain is 'outward-looking', French-inspired Europe is 'inward-looking'. Great Britain's place is the whole world, the globe; nothing else is suitable. 'The choice for Britain is clear,' wrote Shore in 1971, 'either we maintain . . . our close and valued associations overseas and join with others in shaping those world policies and institutions needed . . . not just by the people of one half of a continent but by all mankind, or we choose against the strong current of our interests and sentiments to enter the European Community.'³⁴ From Labour's point of view, imperialism consisted essentially in 'granting to 700 million people the great prize of self-government'—an unbeatable record in internationalist community spirit, surely? How could one half of one continent ever offer enough scope for this Jesus among the nations?

Closely associated with this conception are two others: firstly, the United Kingdom's wide-world *Weltanschauung* is naturally better for the world's poor, for the under-developed, than the grasping egoism of Europe's Bounderbys. We are by historical disposition world-oriented and charitable; the Continent has to be constantly warned against its

³³ *Tribune* 2 July 1971. In the article quoted above Netti and Shapiro point to the magic importance accorded acts of initials by Great Britain's post-war rulers 'belonging' to innumerable bodies became a consolation for real impotence. British official thought soon became unable to sort out reality from appearance in things like WEU, NATO, EFTA, the Council of Europe, and so on. In his pamphlet *The Case Against Entry* (September 1971), Peter Shore argues that without EEC 'Britain is a full member of virtually all the large and powerful organizations that exist in the world today . . . We have our position in the Commonwealth and . . . the General Assembly of the UN . . . NATO and numerous other alliances covering a large part of the globe'.

³⁴ *The Case Against Entry*, p. 18.

own disposition to be 'inward-looking' (self-centred). Secondly, this expansive internationalism is linked to world free trade—that great historical cause of the British bourgeoisie—and to the post-war attempts to encourage international trade like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Kennedy Round, and so on. Again, this appears as a natural (almost instinctive) British posture, while Continentals are suspect of being protectionist. The imperial inheritance of the Commonwealth, the 'maritime view', generosity to the world's poor and free trade all go to form a moral amalgam which—by all the evidence—appeals very strongly to Labourist sensibility, and especially to the left.

For the left wing, a particularly acrid flavour is added to the plot to drag Great Britain into Europe: narrow nationalism, inward-looking protective policies, egoistic concern with one's own 'welfare and advancement'—all this amounts to an image of *capitalism*. Richard Clements further recalled his paper's opposition to the plot, in the *Tribune* article mentioned above: 'In 1961 . . . we wrote that to join EEC would be to turn our backs on the Commonwealth, to abdicate our independent role in world affairs . . . and to postpone the introduction of further measures of socialism . . . The Common Market is not a cornucopia of opportunities. It is a baited trap . . . If Macmillan and the Conservatives had got Britain pinned down and immobilized into the capitalist-orientated EEC, then their task in Britain would have been easier.'⁵⁵ It can hardly be news even to the most godly conscience on the left that Great Britain was *the* original capitalist nation-state, and the leader of European imperialism in the 19th century. Yet somehow it is made to appear today as less 'capitalist-orientated' than the countries of continental Europe. Therefore entering Europe will mean the loss of this potential for socialism or even social revolution. From a foreign (or any extra-national) point of view this might seem simply ridiculous. Representatives of the most politically successful capitalist society in history—where the bourgeoisie has been immovably in the saddle for over three hundred years—denouncing the 'capitalist conspiracy' afoot in their relatively precarious continental neighbours! From the left's peculiar nationalist angle, however, it is a necessary belief. Is this not the whole point of the 'nation' as instrument of estrangement? It can be all things to all men in it, a balloon which can be inflated with magic potentiality in any desired direction—the romantic source (as a notion)

⁵⁵ In a letter to *New Left Review* (No. 70, November–December 1971) Clements accused me of baseless spite against *Tribune* and the Labour left, because I had remarked (ironically) that in their view EEC appeared as a 'cold-war, capitalist conspiracy, . . . in striking contrast to the neutral and socialist Britain we have enjoyed since 1945'. Clements emphasized that his party did not think Britain was *actually* like that, but *potentially* like it: its position was that 'if the gadarene rush towards the Market was stopped it would pose for the British people questions which would almost certainly have a socialist answer'. If one retreats in this way from the plane of actuality to that of potentiality, then the problem becomes: what actual evidence is there *for* such a potential? What in British politics or recent history could lead one to believe that continuing 'splendid isolation' would ('almost certainly') lead to the attainment (at last) of a 'British Socialism'? The Labour Party's achievements of 1964–70? The force represented by *Tribune* and the left (which failed to infect Labour policy one millimetre leftwards in six years)? The Communist Party of Great Britain? The truth is that the Orwellian left has to believe in such a potency (the 'true nation', etc) because it is national first, and socialist afterwards.

of every imaginable social wish. Through its sorcery of confusion Vimy Ridge is reconciled with socialist conscience, Churchillian traditions with 'Clause 4', the City's dominion with the class struggle, the relics of empire with socialism, and the dismal capitalist present with an imminent socialist future.

Labour and Imperialism

The curious contradiction of this British socialist stance is a nationalism which expresses itself in internationalist language—with a strong accent of moralism that dismisses Europe as both 'capitalist' and the home of *Staatsräson* and *Realpolitik*. In part, the high ethical tone gives one immediate clue to the paradox. We noticed the significance of Christian moralism in the ideal formation of the left-wing nation, the nation of the liberal intelligentsia and the political working class. For the latter, the element of spiritual universalism in that inheritance implies that the true nation *must* be more than merely a nation. The Anglo-Scots nation bears within its essence a universal message—its moral-religious mission.⁵⁶ Such a nation is naturally, effortlessly, 'international' in outlook. The guarantee and proof of this character is its superior morality before God—a morality historically realized, one should add, in the superior structure of English civil society and its relative dominance of the State (in contrast to the continental State's dominance of civil society).

Hence there arises an intimate dialectic between the objective reality of the nation—as one territorial entity among others, on an historical basis as contingent as any other—and its subjective culture, the collective psychology of its self-projection upon the outside world. The former is particular, the latter is universal (or at least 'universalizing'). It is extremely difficult for any cultural sector or class within the nation to escape that would-be universal form. As long as the nation-state endures and retains some cultural vitality, it remains the natural 'language' of aspiration, a basic political world-view entertained largely unconsciously—and often *must* unconsciously when the national culture is at its most self-consciously *non*-national, when it lays easy claim to an international validity. Vulgar chauvinism is easily seen through and dismissed. But much of the real vitality and cultural strength of a nation always lies in a very un-vulgar chauvinism, where a particular history has been sublimated into universalist pretence by long historical processes.

The nationalism of the left disposes it particularly to acceptance of these universalist pretensions. As the party of ideal and principle it quite naturally unites the true (potential) nation to them. Then the real nation—the one that exists in sad particularity, deformed by capitalism, under

⁵⁶ The mechanism is exactly similar to that by which the French nation incorporated the message of Enlightenment Reason, through the vital experiences of the Revolution and Jacobinism: the mission here had a quite different and more advanced content, but the same 'national-internationalist' form. On national missions, see F. Chabod, *L'Idée de nation* (1961) p. 82 ff. Chabod later points out how romanticized national 'missions' turned into the justification for imperialism and 'primacy' became the ideology of conquest and war.

the thumb of its ruling class, etc—somehow recedes into insignificance. One can be opposed to *it* (and especially to its deplorable 'narrow chauvinism', betrayals, corruptions, etc) in the name of this grander truth. As if one could escape from nation-state culture so easily! As if these universals did not still bear upon them the hairy imprint of national bias and instinctive prejudices! The left-wing nationalist is like Dr Jekyll: a pure being, too good to be true, who believes himself utterly distinct from the ugly Mr Hyde who has run berserk and drunk with blood through the pages of history. Yet with only a little detachment can one not in fact see the hairy paws clutching nervously at the starched cuffs, and hear the heart thudding impatiently beneath the good Doctor's tight waistcoat.⁵⁷

As well as these general factors, two very important historical experiences farther predispose the Labour Party left towards this sublimated nationalism. The first was that its infancy coincided with the definitive victory of 'liberal imperialism' over the more right-wing variety which had asserted itself in the 1890s and reached a climax in the South African War of 1900–1902. Liberal imperialism represented the central free trade traditions of the English bourgeoisie. It clung, therefore, to the moral internationalism of Cobden and Bright, to their abstract liberal belief in 'freedom' at home and abroad and the simpler and less doctrinaire view of empire which fitted such old beliefs.

Great Britain's version of 'social imperialism' had a strong liberal inflection and was linked to a fairly piecemeal empiricism, both philosophically and politically. All these characteristics were to constitute basic guide-lines of national development throughout the half-century which followed.

The new political Labour movement was carried forward from the nadir of 1900 upon this tide. It advanced in company with the liberal renaissance, and was itself inevitably formed by the general conditions of the period—that is, of an authentic 'founding period' in the course of which 'visibly or invisibly, lines are set which determine the whole course of future developments'.⁵⁸ One of these lines was the ideology of liberal imperialism. The working class was politically integrated into the nation at the moment when the latter was most confused with empire, and when 'empire' had the most effective ideological camouflage at its disposal. British greatness—unlike French or Prussian greatness—was naturally world-wide, Sunday-suited, and unselfish. The national mission had become the mission of empire. The *true* nation had expanded into the *true* (or liberal) imperial system. The nation-state in which the workers were finding a place politically was not just one embattled territorial unit fighting with the others for a place in the sun; from the outset, it appeared as a greater, spiritual,

⁵⁷ George Orwell's *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (1941) is the true *locus classicus* of modern British left-wing nationalism in this sense, recording as it does the 'return' of a left-wing intellectual to healthy patriotism and his demand for a socialism based on it ('The suet puddings and the red pillar-boxes . . .' etc). Orwell formulated in it the unforgettable slogan of British national-socialism: 'No real revolutionary has ever been an internationalist.'

⁵⁸ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, 'Bismarck's Imperialism 1862–1890', *Past and Present* No. 48 (August 1970), p. 150.

multi-racial, intercontinental, realistically heterogeneous something-or-other—a 'meaningful international forum' in Judd's words.

From the outset, consequently, Labourist nationalism took on this strong 'internationalist' coloration. The latter proved the perfect moral legitimization of national sentiment: it set the seal of conscience upon that pragmatic acceptance of the old nation-state to which Labour was borne by its close alliance with the Liberal Party, and its evolutionist philosophy. It gave rise to a certain habit of thought, a customary—almost automatic—outlook, in which particular terms and ideas (like 'outward-looking') assumed a sacred or unchallengeable resonance. This general outlook (or 'world-view') then survived the decline and disappearance of the real apparatus of empire and British power, as one among many of the 'post-imperial' phenomena of British society. Fifty years after the peak of that power, it could still make the whole of western Europe, with its vast population and resources, appear 'narrow' and 'too small'.

This is an internationalism with much the same virtues and faults as the underlying moral-Christian world-view from which it stems historically: the same strength and stubbornness, and the same crippling other-worldliness. It is surely clear that its special rootedness in Labourism arose from the fact of imperialism. That is, from the fact that at the relevant period Great Britain's 'national' interests were indeed world-wide: they were identified with the Gold Standard, the Pound Sterling, the Royal Navy, and global possessions—the material 'internationalism' which provided the basis for left-liberal and Labourist moral 'internationalism'. The latter has not been valueless, obviously (one need only think, in recent history, of its function in relation to China in the 1950s). But it is both limited and treacherous politically. Above all, it has much less in common than appears with the tradition of Marxist internationalism which constitute the most precious inheritance of the European working class.

The second vital historical experience which 'fixed' Labour in its peculiar nationalism was that of 1945 to 1948. This was, in a sense, the continuation and the conclusion of the first. From 1905 to 1914 the Labour Party had taken its first steps nationally in close association with the Liberal Party, as the latter laid the foundations of social imperialism. By 1945 Labourism had completely taken the place of Liberalism in the national political spectrum; and in the years following, it was able to complete the old programme launched in Edwardian times (with few modifications). It was now called the Welfare State. But it represented essentially the same policy of a social liberalism designed, through the agency of an expanded State, to integrate the working class more adequately into national life—a national life, one must remember, still located firmly in an imperialist context.

During the earlier, formative, moment Labourism had been (so to speak) in apprenticeship to Liberalism; in the second, it had *become* Liberalism.⁵⁹ The great 'working-class' party had taken over the con-

⁵⁹ Why does anyone think that the last two Labour leaders, Gaitskell and Wilson have been Simon-pure Liberals—and that the most serious new contender for leadership, Jenkins, is not merely a Liberal but an ardent historian of Liberalism?

tent of social-liberalism and made it its own. The way in which this happened was politically decisive, amounting almost to a second 'founding period'. The point was, of course, that now the working class was the agent of its own integration: it was able to nationalize itself. The only really successful alienation is self-alienation. In 1945 the Labour Party became (as its leaders tirelessly proclaimed, and have never since ceased to prove) a national and responsible party, a 'party of government'. At last, it measured up to the nation, was worthy of it. Marriage replaced the somewhat primitive and furtive *liaisons* of the '20s and '30s. In this way, the full admission of the working class into the political nation appeared (and to some extent really was) its own achievement. And on the other hand, if through Labourism the class had become worthy of the nation, had not the nation (likewise) shown itself worthy of all the democratic-evolutionist hopes placed in it? It had said 'Yes'. The national 'British way' appeared vindicated.

It would not have been vindicated in the same fashion if a Liberal or Coalition government had enacted much of the same legislation. What mattered from the point of view of political psychology—the popular attitudes which have sustained Labourism ever since—was that the people's party, the left, did it. It was this which so profoundly reinforced the left's nationalism, and renovated all the myths still powerful in 1971. In another sense too the moment was all-important. For it came immediately after the great national victory of the Second World War, while 1940 and the years of 'war-time socialism' were fresh experiences. It was due, as a matter of fact, to the mighty social upheavals of the war and not to the political campaigns or propaganda conducted by the party. But this is to say that it was organically connected to another powerful myth, one even more potent and meaningful—by far the most important popular myth of contemporary Britain. This was the recollection of popular national resistance to nazism, and of the colossal mobilization of energy which followed between 1940 and 1945. It was out of this archetypal nationalist triumph that Labour's moment of real authority had come, still warm with its heat and bright with its reflected colours. Is it surprising if, ever since, the Labour Party has turned aside from its grey liberalism and faded Christianity at times of crisis and sought to find again these true colours of nationality?

The crucial renaissance of nationalism also sustained the 'internationalist' false consciousness we have been examining. The great popular-national victory was also the reaffirmation of the 'world role', the universal presence and responsibilities. In fact, no aspect of British left ideology received a stronger boost from events than this, precisely because of the dominance of the joint Anglo-American philosophy of political de-colonization. In the nature of things, it was Great Britain which had to give effect to it. Hence to the 'Welfare State' internally there corresponded the transition from empire to 'Commonwealth' externally; in Gaitskell's 1962 speech both are presented as Labour achievements (the dual trophies of left-wing nationalism). Objectively this transition may have been one part of the formation of US-based global neo-imperialism; subjectively, it manifested itself to Labour as the enactment of Ramsay MacDonald's Ten Commandments and Morality's universal sway.

Nationalism and the US Empire

If more evidence is needed here of the true nature of this nationalis 'internationalism', it can surely be found in one very striking aspect of the left's recent history. Whether and in what sense the Common Market stands for a 'capitalist conspiracy' of narrow nationalists or an Iron Heel of monopolists is a peculiarly debatable question. What really cannot be questioned at all is that there is a great—the greatest—capitalist power in close alliance with the British nation-state; that this power has exercised a virtual stranglehold over Britain's foreign policy (including the policy of Labour governments) for a quarter of a century; that both its military and its economic grip on Great Britain are very extensive, perfectly visible, and (especially recently) painfully felt and that for nearly a decade this power has been waging imperialist war in the most blatant contradiction of any spirit of ethical internationalism

And yet the Labour Party has never found it possible to take up the kind of fervent stand against *that* power which it has twice taken up against the relatively weak and ambiguous European capitalism of the EEC. The point is not that the Labour left wing has failed to contest its imperialism in the pages of *Tribune* and elsewhere. It has consistently criticized NATO and demanded British neutrality or independence in the Cold War, just as it participated actively in CND. But at no moment did it even seem likely that the party at large would unite with its 'soul' on this issue. One part of Labourism certainly resented the humiliation of the 'special relationship'—but it was never remotely possible that such resentment would inspire a *majority* crusade against the 'sell-out' (i.e. against the most distinctly 'capitalist-orientated' nation on earth) on *nationalist* grounds. British 'national sovereignty' was in fact bludgeoned and trampled flat for 20 years, most notably when Labour was in office from 1964 to 1970. Why did this never arouse the massive compulsive protests of 1971, cries of betrayal, anguish at loss of birth right, outraged national-popular anger at foreign plots, and so on? In 1971 and early 1972 hot and righteous rage was expressed by Labour's anti-Market majority against the pro-Market minority which had arrogantly refused to heed the will and sentiments of the masses: the men were arrant élitists and traitors, to both party and nation. But what of that pro-American élite which had tranquilly controlled the party (and sometimes the nation too) for so many years? What of the wretched lackeys of NATO esconced upon the innumerable front organizations of Atlanticism, comfortable in their mid-century anti communism, responsibly silent about Vietnam, who had after all actually *done*, time and time again, what the pro-EEC faction was merely hoping to do: betray the nation's independence?

It was suggested above that mere denunciation of perennial leadership 'betrayal' was a kind of theoretical error, since the 'fault' lay actually in the underlying structure of Labourism—in the basic geology of its relationship to the nation, so to speak, rather than in right-wing villainy. The same remark may be made here. For the fact is that the American relationship and the style and rhetoric of us empire do not have the same relationship to the structure of British nationalism as Europe does. Consequently the internationalist guise of that national feeling

cannot be made to apply to them in the same way. The ideology's real incidence is variable, it is not what it seems. In the one case it relates positively to a traditional mass feeling, so that on occasion a vital political current flows between the Labour leaders, the Labour left, and the party's rank and file (as in 1962 and 1971). In the other case it remains the staunch moral protest of a minority, impotent to move the organization as a whole. In the one case it goes with the particular motion and configuration of British left-nationalism; in the other, it goes against it. Why is this?

There is little space to explore the reasons here. However, one or two things may be worth mentioning. Of these the most important is probably the remarkable basic similarity of the Old British and new American imperialism. The two most distinctive features of the American empire, Gareth Stedman Jones has pointed out, are 'Its *non-territorial* character . . . its non-possession of a formal colonial empire (and) its possession of a *formally anti-imperialist* ideology' sustained by an ideology of 'freedom'.⁶⁰ This has led to 'The *invisibility* of American imperialism when compared with the territorial colonialism of European countries'. The British imperial system was, of course, both territorial and formally colonialist at the end of the 19th century. But its essential economic character was much closer to the American model than those phenomena suggested. This was exactly what had lain behind the victory of 'liberal imperialism' in 1906, and the long retreat of the following half-century towards progressively more 'informal' structures—the transition from Empire to Commonwealth and Sterling Area. Labourism and the national left developed to their present forms in conjunction with this transition, and had to cope with it through an 'internationalist' ideology.

The effectiveness of this ideology, in turn, made the character of us 'Open Door' imperialism relatively invisible. Its ethical internationalism, anti-militarism (or even pacifism), and its close link with economic free trade, all brought it surprisingly close, for example, to Woodrow Wilson's version of America's global interest. As Truman said much later, 'The Open Door policy is not imperialism, it is free trade'.⁶¹ It is

⁶⁰ 'The Specificity of us Imperialism', *New Left Review* No. 60 (March–April 1970) pp. 61–3.

⁶¹ G. Stedman Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 86. One is constantly struck, for example, by the similarity of language and concept between the British left and Kennedy's global offensive of the Grand Design era. 'Britain', wrote court chronicler Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 'with its world obligations, could keep the EEC from becoming a high-tariff, inward-looking, white man's club' (*A Thousand Days*, 1967, p. 772). That was its precise function in the Grand Design of us empire, and why—as de Gaulle knew—Kennedy supported British entry to EEC so actively. 'Outward-looking' was a key adjective of us empire as well as of *Tribune's* editorial pages. The empire needed all the 'wider co-operation', 'meaningful international forums', 'non-exclusive associations', etc, it could lay its hands on. As imperial roving ambassador Walter Lipmann candidly observed: 'The us needs this large liberal trading area if it is to expand its trade and thus . . . earn the hard money to finance its commitments overseas' (*Western Unity and the Common Market*, 1962, p. 38). Vietnam, for example. But, thunders Lipmann, 'If the EEC becomes a closed, restrictive and exclusive society . . . the us can always use the big stick and threaten to take away its troops. To be 'inward-looking' is a major crime in the perspective of us empire, as well as in that of Peter Shore or Douglas Jay. *Western Unity and the Common Market* is a document of

of course, just this 'invisibility' (by which European pimples stand out in indignant relief while us boils are taken for granted) which has to be explained.

In this historical context, it is not at all surprising that there has been much objective collusion (quite unintended by the Labour left and similar groups) between certain characteristic British and American political attitudes. A long 20th-century national experience (of which the Second World War was perhaps the most vital episode) has quite naturally modelled popular nationalism in this fashion, and produced the 'blind spot' in question. In all its attitudes, left as well as right, a thoroughly national entity like Labourism has to take account of such a formation. What is indicated is not necessarily hypocrisy but a profound and sometimes unconscious adaptation to national reality. The old left's 'internationalism' was certainly not a mere facade or smoke-screen for chauvinism; yet its true political sense—its capacity to arouse really deep popular feeling, and hence its periodic utility to Labourism—was largely a function of nationalism. After all, the rooted conviction that only the whole wide world will serve as a natural sphere of action for one's nation is, itself, the frankest expression of an immensely inflated national ego.

the utmost imperial conceit. Yet comparison with an aboriginal 'anti-Market' tract like Jay's *The Truth About the Common Market* (published about the same time) shows astonishing identity of views. In fact, Jay argued simply that Britain's true national interest lay with Kennedy's Trade Expansion Bill rather than with EEC. Looked at in this light, much of the old 'anti-European' argument was clearly a form of false consciousness which fitted snugly into and served the commanding imperial mystifications of the day.

VI The Labour Crisis: Nation Before Class

It has happened more than once in history that, when the revolution was not strong enough to solve those historical problems ripe for solution, reaction has itself been forced to try and resolve them.

L. Trotsky, *Disarmament and the United States of Europe* (1929)

What we must try to see next is how these features of the Labour Party were mobilized in the particular fashion of 1971, with the particular intensity that characterized the great 'anti-Market' campaign. Consider again the circumstances of early 1971. The Labour Party had just emerged from a long and demoralizing experience of government. This failure had not been wholly its fault. In part, it simply reflected the general decline and impotence of the old European nation-state, in a world at once more closely interdependent and dominated by the great nations outside Europe. However, such general historical causes were not clearly registered in the party's still nationalist world-view, and it was bound to suffer badly from the effects of failure. By any standards the fall from the large hopes and excitement of 1964 to the dismal conservatism and apathy of 1970 had been a long one. How could it fail to affect the movement—and above all, to affect Labour's deep idealism, its sustaining emotions?

Yet just on this point one is confronted by a puzzling fact. The ordinary reaction of deeply wounded idealism is indignation, anger—in a political movement, anger above all at betrayal. This is normally accompanied by a search for culprits and errors, and demands for re-formulation of the creed—in other words, by disputes, heightened factionalism, and a clash of ideas. The history of the Labour Party itself after the defeat of 1951 is a record of vigorous feuds of this kind. Surely then the grim disenchantments of the 1960s and the bitter defeat of 1970 ought to have revived them in a form even more acute?

Nothing of the sort happened. The Labour Party behaved as if stunned, in the latter part of 1970 and the beginning of 1971. There was no wave of political recriminations, no political soul-searching.⁶² 'An interesting thing didn't happen in 1970,' wrote Mervyn Jones in May 1971. 'After the defeat of 1951 and again after the lost election of 1959 . . . the Labour Party occupied itself with inquiry, explanation and recrimination. But in 1970 not a dog barked.'⁶³ To all appearances, ideological vitality had drained away from the movement. The old left-versus-right conflict had been in many ways both limited and ambiguous; but now even this seemed diminished. No serious ideological challenge was offered to the leadership group; and Wilson's personal pre-eminence

⁶² Such reflection on 1964–70 as has emerged to date (from Lord George-Brown, Lord Wigg and others) has been on the level of mindless gossip and paltry paranoia established by Mr Wilson's own *Personal Record*.

⁶³ *New Statesman*, May, 1971. See also four articles by M. Dean, 'Is Labour Dying?' *Guardian*, January 1971.

was not, in spite of the bankruptcy it now stood for, even implicitly contested for more than a year.

This corpse-like inertia did not reflect any corresponding immobility in civil society. Far from it. As we saw before, the class discontent which had marked the end of Labour's period in office continued to grow. All political commentators remarked on this new and more violent social climate. It was a scene where unpredictable novelties seemed likely to dominate. The acute inflationary spiral obviously presented a new degree of threat to the whole working class. The miners' strike of early 1972 was won partly by the employment of new and more aggressive picketing tactics on a national scale. By its nature the new Industrial Relations Bill posed strikingly different and complex problems to the trade unions—it threatened to alter some of the basic 'rules' of the British class war itself. While the Labour Party lumbered, evidently unable to summon up energy for a decent internal quarrel, its social basis was shaking dangerously beneath it. To its blatant lack of any new social vision there corresponded in reality the emergence of urgent new social and political demands. ✦

Another factor should be added to the picture of this odd disparity. It appears certain that in 1971 the Labour Party was in any case constitutionally far less able to respond effectively to new pressures from its old class basis. In comparing 1962-4 to 1971 previously, we noted that the strong similarities in Labour's nationalist reactions at these two dates did not preclude very important differences. The ideological apathy and disorientation of 1970-1 is, of course, one such difference. But behind it there lies another one—a sort of deep sea-change at work in the foundations of Labourism. What this long-term change will mean in the eventual fate of the Labour Party is still quite unclear; however, it was already contributing something to the particular configurations of 1971. ✦

In a most important recent study of Labourism's 'grass roots', Barry Hindess concluded that the past decade witnessed 'an absolute decline in voting and in other forms of orthodox political activity' and an equal decline in 'the close association between party and social class'.⁶⁴ Consequently there has been 'a progressive disappearance of the class polarization of formal politics'. What he calls ironically 'the decline and fall of social democracy' in Great Britain has led to a growing divorce between 'class' in the traditional sense and political life. The working class has been gradually alienated from Labourism, and Labourism has become gradually more 'middle class' in its active personnel and attitudes. 'Class has been taken, or rather forced, out of politics . . .', goes in Hindess. Formerly, 'the apparent class nature of politics had, for very many people, effectively eliminated the problem of voting choice: one voted for the appropriate party often without even needing to consider the particular policies offered.' This was in fact 'the great stabilizing factor in British politics throughout this century—at least since the disintegration of the once powerful Libera

⁶⁴ *The Decline of Working Class Politics* (1971), especially Chs. 7 and 8, 'The Changing Face of Politics', and 'Conclusions'.

Party'. Now, the automatic element of stabilization represented by 'class' is disintegrating. There is taking place 'a breakdown of the social control which the Labour Party has been able to exercise over such a large section of the population' (although of course the change is still hidden by the persistence of old forms and labels, especially at national level).

In the light of considerations like these there is no exaggeration in speaking of a Labour crisis. In 1970-1 Labourism was suffering from defeat and deep political disorientation, and coping very badly with the situation. And its ominous incapacity to find renewal ideologically was demonstrated against the background of rapidly falling membership and militancy, and the marked trend towards *embourgeoisement* which Hindess picks out.⁶⁵ This was the state in which the party confronted the 'great debate': a declining empire of national socialism, lifeless at the top and increasingly unsure of its old social basis. And at the same time as the old stable foundation of 'class' (i.e. the defensive and conservative side of class-consciousness) was crumbling away, new tremors from the real class struggle agitated the entire movement from below.

Nation Before Class

As we saw, Labourism mediates between nation and class, and does so by establishing the general ascendancy of nation over class. However, the laws of this mediation are not simple or uniform. They vary from time to time, according to the condition of the class struggle, and to whether or not the party is in office. There is a constant tension between the class basis and the national function. In order to fulfil the latter, the Labour Party has to attend to the former at times—and with greatest zeal, obviously, when 'the natives are restless' and the class struggle threatens to erupt. Yet here—that is, in the whole period from 1970 to the present—it at once confronts a grave dilemma. To align itself with every strike, support every factory occupation and each minor incident in the struggle against the Industrial Relations Bill, would bring the accusation of being 'merely a class party': of irresponsibility, fostering anarchy against the law of the land and so on. This is an impossible choice for Labourism. It would mean endangering the party's hold on moderate opinion and its alliance with the predominantly conservative leaderships of the trade union movement. It would imply embracing the class struggle, instead of striving to 'integrate' it with the form of the State; tearing the fabric of national society, instead of holding it intact at all costs. But, fortunately for Labour, there is another way. It is perfectly possible to sustain a fulsome rhetoric of sympathy with class *and* counteract the risks of this stance with even greater emphasis upon the nation—upon the party's patriotism and its

⁶⁵ It is certainly not without significance in this context that the only new tendency in such Labour 're-thinking' as did take place after 1970 was a marked *populism* (Crookland, Gyford, Haseler, and others). This was founded upon alarm that Labour had become too 'liberal' and 'middle class' in outlook—and hence must return to being a 'class party'. On Hindess's analysis, the alarm was well-founded. Since the concept of 'class' being defended was essentially conservative folklore, it was of course logical that 'back to class' should emerge here as the slogan of a reactionary, right-wing populism.

seamless devotion to national sovereignty and the accompanying paraphernalia.

To some extent this problem is solved automatically when Labour is actually in power at the time. Then, the rules of mediation are different. Labourism has become temporarily the custodian of the Crown Jewels. Having achieved union with the divine essence, it can afford to be more matter-of-fact about her—not quite as matter-of-fact as the owners, maybe, but at least less stertorously patriotic. For the time being, the whole weight of the State and national tradition ('law of the land', etc) is naturally imposed upon the class struggle, and all rebellion is at once labelled as 'betrayal' of both party and nation. It is always *unfair* to damage the prospects of the party which is *doing its best* in the interests of the nation as a whole, and against great odds. From that position, the question of the Common Market looked very different. 'To the British government, whether Conservative or Labour,' one commentator has written, 'the '60s taught a simple and decisive lesson. The only alternative to Europe was isolation, and to a political Establishment made up of the responsible and ambitious of both parties at Westminster that would have meant accepting the end of any significant international role for Britain. In office both parties were unwilling to agree to any such thing'.⁶⁶ In office, the Labour Party moved quite naturally from the anti-Europeanism of 1962-4 to Wilson's own attempt to enter EEC: it was, all things considered, the responsible and sensible thing to do in the national interest.

In 1971, things began to look different. The party had been abruptly and humiliatingly evicted from its 'natural ruling party' dream to its old familiar voyeurism *vis-à-vis* the nation. It had floundered inertly for nearly a year. It was under growing pressure from below to oppose the government in every possible way, while every indication available to it showed that Europe was no longer a popular issue—especially among its own following, where it was clear that nearly all trade union would be against entry. Given this combination of circumstances, it was only natural for Labour to slide back again to the stance of 1962. The necessities of opposition are different from those of power.

Consider the advantages of the switch. It meant that the movement had a 'cause' again—in effect, the noisy debate about the Common Market took the place of the political and ideological disputes which had failed to emerge after 1970. It occupied the vacuum. There was not a single new notion about socialism in the air; but there was still the nation. Unite with her, the national interest demanded Europe; after the divorce, it was again possible to imagine her raped, betrayed, sold out, dishonoured. Possible, and overwhelmingly tempting—for the long politic

⁶⁶ Alan Watson, *Europe at Risk* (1972), p. 139. Nobody who has studied the background of Labour's application can doubt for a moment (in spite of the frenzied disclaimers issued in 1971-2) that, had Wilson won a small majority in 1970 and been in power when the French attitude changed in May 1971, he would have presented British entry as a mighty triumph for himself and his party. One may suspect that the campaign to win over public opinion to the idea (attacked by Labour in 1970 as a scandalous misuse of public funds etc.) would have been far bigger and more noisy than it was under Heath.

experience of Labourism had showed that no subject was so capable of mobilizing emotion, uniting enemies, and distracting attention from social realities. Threatened by the raw, turbulent reality of the class struggle, Labourism could easily contain and canalize if only a 'national' form for it was found—if, that is, the mounting unrest and the fight against the Industrial Relations Bill could be assimilated to the fight against the Common Market, as vaguely 'the same thing'. Then, Labour could appear again (after the sadness of 1964–70) as the party of both class and nation.⁶⁷ Its traditional mode of mystification would revive; new political life would flow into the wilting organism.

Labour's Resurrection

The chance was too good to miss, for a majority of the Labour leadership. And this badly-needed new popularity was so easily obtained!—basically, simply by falling back upon the conventional posture of indignant patriotism and righteous defence of the inheritance. Thus, from the spring of 1971 onwards, the Labour corpse was suddenly up and about again. In June 1970 it had looked ready for the undertaker; by July 1971 it was palpitating with new vigour, its pallor had given way to the unhealthy flush of rediscovered nationalism. For a year the old fellow had seemed incapable even of an intelligent interest in his own fate; then suddenly he was out of bed, bellowing about the threat to his kippers, his beer and his parliament.

There were two disadvantages to the shift. One was, of course, the blatant inconsistency involved in the same leaders following the new line. This had to be covered up somehow, and it was done by inflating the problem of 'the terms of entry' into a gigantic enigma. The terms which would have been 'favourable' (when Labour was in charge of things, etc) had become suddenly 'unfavourable' since the Tory Munichers and sell-outers pursued exactly the same policy.⁶⁸ The second and more grave inconvenience was that Wilson and most of his colleagues knew only too well the embarrassment which such a grotesque reversal might bring them in future. If they returned to office again in 1973 or 1974, it would almost certainly be to a nation com-

⁶⁷ Thus, e.g. those most conscious of Labour's loss of its old class basis and appeal were most insistent that the Common Market was a true class issue—Labour's right-wing populists, like Stephen Haesler: 'Essentially it is a class division that is building up on . . . the Common Market . . . In fact of all the single-issue controversies of this century it is quite possible that the Common Market question is the most amenable to a class interpretation.' Hence, to fight entry to Europe was to assert that 'Britain remains predominantly a working-class country resistant to technical change', and so regain political appeal to this 'country'. (*Tribune*, 18 June 1971.)

⁶⁸ Hence that prodigious outbreak of brow-furrowing and mouth-pursing which struck Labourism like a tidal wave in 1971. Politicians who in office had been consistently unable to estimate the balance of payments correctly to within £100m now knew what the price of butter would be in five years time. Sleepless nights passed over the ledgers of Great Britain Ltd showed how (contrary to the hopes of the previous managers) 'the price is too high' nowadays. Patriotic instinct and high-minded care for under-developed brothers coincided, suddenly and suspiciously, with ruthless arithmetic and the cult of 'hard facts'. However, one hard fact was that the former Labour Common Market negotiator George Thompson declared in July 1971 that in his view no better terms could have been obtained by a Labour government, and that (by the standards of 1967) they were entirely acceptable.

mitted to the Common Market. The 'national interest' of the City and the business class would, by that time, make withdrawal unthinkable. So they would have to switch back again somehow, leaving behind them a veritable minefield of easy political attacks and satirical jokes. Prime Minister Wilson had already a mighty reputation for evasiveness and opportunism before 1971. Is this why he hesitated for so long, in the spring and early summer of 1971, before finally coming 'off the fence' about Europe—and so consecrating that reputation for good?

However, political memories are short; or so they must have hoped (basing themselves, doubtless, upon recollections of the party's dizzying changes of direction between 1964 and 1970). And the short-term advantages were overwhelming. It was seen what they were at the July special conference called to debate the whole question.

The most loudly applauded speech at that gathering was made by Peter Shore, the author of *The Case Against Entry*. He stated that the terms of entry were 'appallingly bad' for the people of Great Britain, and rehearsed the (by then familiar) theory of the French Plot. All this entailed we would have to pay out to Europe 'more than we paid out in two world wars'. The government did not dare tell the truth about what was happening: it involved a 'gross deceit' that might lead to a 'great national disaster'. But fortunately the Labour Party still had the chance to stay the tide of 'national defeatism' sweeping us into Europe and prevent this 'act of madness'. Shore's strain of patriot paranoia proved effective. He got a prolonged ovation, and a later speaker was not ashamed to describe his speech as 'Churchillian'. (There is, as a matter of fact, a living orator to whom his style and intonation often approached quite closely—e.g. the insistence on 'disaster' and 'madness'—J. Enoch Powell.)

Before this high point, Clive Jenkins had treated the conference to his own (similar) version of gospel. He had invited it to look severely upon the 'harsh realities' of the question. Great Britain was moving towards union with one small fraction of Europe; *he* wanted to look towards the wide world, the world as a whole. Then followed a portrait of the pitiable European parish-pump: a hot-bed of reaction and instability. France had been near civil war scarcely three years before. Italy was in a state of near-anarchy, and menaced by a right-wing *coup d'état* . . . why should Britain imperil its tradition by joining societies like these?⁶⁹ And anyway, the Common Market was capitalist: the big corporations wanted us to join, and how can what is good for capitalism be good for ordinary folk? 'We can look after ourselves,' concluded Jenkins. The British people would rather manage its own affairs than be managed by 'the Brussels bureaucracy'. Was the Labour Committee for Europe part of the capitalist conspiracy against the folk?, he added: let it publish its

⁶⁹ It might have been objected (but was not) that the French 'civil war' arose out of the greatest workers' strike in European history, and that Italian 'anarchy' was associated with the strong working-class militancy of 1968 to 1970, and that Mr Jenkins found it worth while to hold a joint meeting with French trade union colleagues in the course of 1971, to exchange views and compare experiences. But these harsh realities were irrelevant to the Labour-patriot style.

accounts and show how the poisoned tentacles of Fiat and the Deutsche Bank had reached into the Labour Party itself.

Nearly all the elements noted above were present in Mr Jenkins' brief and much-applauded speech: nationalism, its wide-world halo, the moral and conservative content actually ascribed to Britain's superiority, the idea of conspiracy, the notion that 'capitalism' and 'bureaucracy' are somehow continental and alien to the ways of the British *Volk*, and the suggestion of betrayal from above. The usual inconsequential glee of his performance contrasted strongly with Mr Shore's stately fustian, and, for example, with the simplistic bluntness of Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers Union.⁷⁰ But such contrasts served only to emphasize the common message.

The point is not that pro-Common Market speakers were lacking. There were plenty of them, but they were speaking against the tide. Nor did the conference arrive at any irrevocable or binding decision on the party, in spite of its strong anti-Europe majority: the party managers had seen to that (and Mr Wilson had not yet 'officially' decided to oppose entry). But it certainly infused a new sense of meaning and importance into Labourism—a sense signally absent since the expiry of 'Wilsonism' five years before. The tide at work was one which united the class struggle, the material anxieties of the working class, the political fight against Toryism, and the defence of 'our nation' into one political impulse: as if preserving national 'independence', evicting Conservatism from office, winning the trade union battle against inflation, and advancing to some kind of British Socialism (unspecified) were all the same thing. Social and class struggle, and certain traditional left-wing hopes were being—so to speak—re-endowed with national form and dignity. Appropriate emotion flowed where, until recently, there had been a desert of apathy and bewilderment. Somehow it all felt right.

The real 'Conspiracy'

On the basis of this feeling, Labourism could become itself once more. By leaning leftwards, it won back the enthusiasm of the left wing in the party and the trade unions: its old soul gave out a few spasms, at least. And by agitating the Union Jack at the same time, it converted this dangerous energy into what seemed (at the time) the safest and most exploitable form. The left-wing nation was back on its two club feet again. The working class was nationalizing itself anew. 'Unity' was re-established, in that curious sense characteristic of Labourism, where the proletarian unity of trade union and class is subtly confused with, and sublimated into, the quite different and mystified 'unity' of the nation. Things were in their proper order again: upside down: nation before class.

⁷⁰ At a T & GWU meeting held just previously, only 4 delegates out of 900 had voted in favour of entering Europe. Mr Jones deserved a prize for the most radically ambiguous anti-European argument of the year: the employees of the Imperial War Graves Commission were members of his union, he said, and they had to be paid a lot extra because of the higher cost of living in France.

This hastily rediscovered unity was to prove, in fact, both transient and treacherous. The flush would soon die away. The pro-Europe group in the party did not decline into the protesting impotence expected of Labour opposition. Before long, it was challenging Wilson's leadership. However, while the second childhood lasted it allowed some old totems to be aired. Ex-minister James Callaghan, for example, treated party and nation to his recipe for an alternative to the Common Market in early July. It was simple. All the British had to do was 'run the economy flat out for five years', sacrificing everything else to national industrial growth (teeth-gritting, belt-pulling-in, etc). We can look after ourselves: independence secured, overseas links retained, our very own socialism safeguarded. What was this but the etiolated spectre of national socialism, the spirit of 1964 risen Dracula-like from the tomb and flapping its useless wings again? The man had spent six years in office as part of a government whose sole historic achievement had been to prove the futility of the recipe. Yet here he was solemnly dusting cobwebs off the thing and dangling it happily in front of the public. It was as if a British general had crawled on to Dover beach after the Dunkirk rout in 1940 and gasped out his new-found strategy for winning the war: another British Expeditionary Force! If Callaghan had been covered in ridicule or greeted with proper rage from the ranks of his own party the incident would not have mattered. The climate was quite different; nobody even laughed. From the left, it simply looked like one ex-minister an inch or two in front of the rest (Wedgwood Benn, Healey, Crosland, etc) in the great race to grasp time's forelock and lead that movement of the future, the campaign against the Common Market. With nationalism back in its proper party place, almost anyone could get away with almost anything.

The point is not just that the movement was mistaken, and represented in reality a mere cul-de-sac where the Labour Party would chew its own tail for a year or so, while Conservatism got more firmly in the saddle. Labour's fervent reaffirmation of class-in-nation was neither more nor less 'wrong' than it had been in the past. It is not that it 'betrayed' the class struggle proceeding at that time so urgently, by distracting the political attention and vital emotions of so many militants on to hopeless nationalist scarecrows. The important thing is not simply that it re-injected a short fever of life into sclerotic conventions and gave an utterly discredited party leadership a new lease of life. All these things were, of course, true. But the main point—in terms of the analysis traced out above—is perhaps that Labourism could not help doing this. It was in its nature to act in this way. That was why it felt so right, and so 'inevitable', to so many people; that was why the entire episode worked politically, to the extent that it did. In the wilderness of 1970 to 1971 the Labour Party was groping around in the dark, looking for a sign; May 1971 brought the sign, in the shape of the Heath-Pompidou *entente* and the 'great debate'; Labourism could be itself once more. It had been (as it remains) paralysed by the social struggle; but it could be revived by the *national* pseudo-struggle. It cannot attack the nation via the class struggle; but it certainly can (and in 1971, did) attack the class struggle via the nation.

Consider the events from another and wider point of view. It was sug-

gested above that something of the phoniness and inertia of the great debate about Europe must have come from its function as an obstacle or diversion, in relation to the living struggles and tensions of British society. Now, in examining the Labour Party's contribution to it, we have been able to see how that function was possible. It was through the Labour Party's reaction to events—through its relapse into nationalism—that most of the diversion in fact occurred. Conservatism itself, in spite of its remarkable degree of political unity and the other characteristics we noted, could not have achieved this. It was too unpopular, too nakedly involved in the social struggle, and too concerned with the basic changes of British capitalism's 'new course'. However, it was not alone, not 'by itself'. Such is the essential meaning of a national-class hegemony. In the latter, political-party Conservatism and its specific ideology are only parts of a larger functional system of conservatism or conservation and within this system different elements may be in conflict and opposition, but also support and assist each other at a deeper level through devotion to the totality and to the particular role they have created for themselves inside it. This sort of collusion is (obviously) nothing to do with 'conspiracies'. Or at least, if a conspiracy is involved, it is the one represented at UNO and usually bearing the label 'United Kingdom'. One cannot help observing that, in 1971, the Labour Party behaved precisely in the way most calculated to stifle emerging social strife and class 'anarchy', to award the Heath government an invaluable respite by co-operating in a kind of national pantomime-battle, and to strengthen the national and social fibres being tested by a difficult moment of history. But of course nothing is ever 'calculated' in that sense. Subjectively, Labourism was simply striving to regain some lost ground and cope with its own profound crisis, in the only way it knew how—the way provided by a long and profoundly national historical experience. Labourism wished to return to being itself again. But precisely—being 'itself' means putting the nation first, standing up for certain values which, although they may carry an intonation of 'socialism' or 'class' yet reveal themselves under pressure as those of the national experience.

A National Logic

We saw earlier what a paradoxical character the 'great debate' assumed. The great 'national' party put class before nation, while the 'class' party put nation before class. But just as there was a logic to the ruling class's new course, so there was one to the Labour Party's response. The paradox was only apparent, and underneath it lay a logic which was—in the widest sense—that of a characteristically national political system.

Nationalism appeared the right or 'normal' posture of a ruling class—above all in Great Britain, perhaps, where a long history of close national unity culminated so recently in the Churchillian triumphs of 1940–5. But the appearance corresponds to reality no longer. Nor was that correspondence ever a necessary one. The political history of European ruling classes in the 19th and 20th centuries shows wide variations in their attitude towards the nation and the ideology of national power. For example, after the fall of Napoleon and the Vienna

settlement most continental ruling classes remained for a generation mistrustful of or even hostile to the new force of nationalism. They still half-identified it with Jacobinism, democracy, and revolution. To conserve their power they preferred to count on the Church and the restored social hierarchies of Metternich's *ancien régime*. Only after the revolutions of 1848 and the wars of the following decades was it understood what great new possibilities lay concealed in the spirit of nationalism triumphant, and how easily that spirit could be mobilized against democracy and the class struggle. In the age of imperialism then dawning, ruling classes became ultra-nationalist everywhere they could (and if they could not—as in the multi-national empires of eastern Europe—they were doomed to extinction).

Once again, one might say, European ruling classes are 'changing the form' of their domination. They are emerging from the century in which nationalism was all-important to them and, in vastly changed circumstances, seeking a post-nationalist hegemony to conserve their power. There is too little space here to discuss the vast contradictions and uncertainties of this process. Is it akin to Europe's last era of 'supra-nationalism', the Restoration and Holy Alliance of 1815-48? Or does it represent something more like the formation of one of the modern nation-states out of the provinces and petty principalities formerly occupying its territory (e.g. Italy or Germany)? Or is it something wholly new and unprecedented?

However these questions are answered, we have been able to glimpse something of what the change means in the case of one national ruling class—a change of skin all the more striking because of that class's past political successes, and because it is the last major bourgeoisie of western Europe to opt for it. Until well past mid-century it clung determinedly to its national and imperial glories, and the old political traditions associated with them, stubbornly refusing to merge its fortunes as a class with continental capitalism. The lateness of its change, and the relative suddenness with which it has been enacted, expose clearly the political problems and dilemmas involved. The very rapidity and success of the move underline the point: the ruling class could do what it liked with the nation, precisely because it was *not* 'necessary' to it any longer. It had served for a time as the mystic shell of property and the incantation of the State; but whereas property and the State are essential, it is not.

On the other hand, while the owners had decided that nationalism should be 'phased out', the owned were hardly in the same position. They had been the political victims of the nation-state, not its beneficiaries. The political mould being abandoned was one in which the class struggle had been forced into a national form and compressed into strong over-identity with the nation-state and all its accessories. The class struggle, is, of course, as 'essential' to a bourgeois social order as property or the State—and its *long-term* identification with the nation or nationalism is not more necessary. However, its immediate or short-term relation to them is quite different. Precisely because it *was* the great social force being repressed and because this repression proved so successful and lasted for so long, it cannot possibly abandon its existing

form so easily. It has therefore been driven to defend that form, everywhere, against the ruling class. In the world of the *Communist Manifesto*, 1848, and Marx's 1st International, the class struggle threatened to assume an international form, and was resisted and stifled by the national forms of bourgeois power. Now, after the era of European national imperialism, the class struggle has everywhere been fixed in these national limits—in forms where it has acquired great inertia and the natural conservatism of hard-won reforms. Bourgeois power, therefore, can afford to leave it there as it seeks new international or multi-national forms. It does so very cautiously, amid great confusion and contradiction. But it does so in response to profound economic and political imperatives laid down by the evolution of the whole world order, and there can be no doubt that the tendency is crucial, and irreversible. In this movement outwards to new political and State horizons, the principal asset of the western European bourgeoisies is a simple one: the absence of the left. They have a great margin of manoeuvre at their disposal, simply because the class struggle in Europe long ago lost any concrete international dimension. They are able to pose, for a time, questions to which the socialist and communist left simply have no answer, as long as they remain penned (both politically and culturally) inside the old frontiers: no answer, that is, except futile opposition, evasion of the issue, or a harmless rhetoric of abstract internationalism.

This is exactly what the ruling class of Great Britain was able to do in 1971. This is why its so-called 'great debate' about Europe was an asinine and humiliating *dialogue des sourds*, which in the end served its purposes very well. No one should be deceived, in this respect, by the many peculiarities of the British political system and its situation in 1971. If one looks rather to the underlying structure of the political dilemma which that year brought, then Great Britain appears as a typical European nation—and as one where the particular course of events only helped to clarify and underline a quite general problem. Many of the ideas and reactions we have looked at were 'particular' in the sense of national; but the reality they were brought to bear upon was not. The essential *décalage* between the two sides in the great debate—between ruling-class strategy and the left's national response—was produced by a general trend of historical development, and as a mainstream of European history this must be considered comparable to that which prevailed between 1848 and Europe's imperialist *fin-de-siècle*. Only then the development was away from a European order towards nationalism à l'outrance, while now it works in the opposite direction, away from national power and ideology and towards the naissant European order represented by the Common Market.

In the pursuit of its new course the ruling class achieved a badly needed coherence of purpose and political sentiment and provoked a serious schism within the opposition, so that ruling-class unity was soon contrasted by left-wing feuds and bitterness. The point is not that 'unity' (and still less the sort of unity Labourism stands for historically) is always desirable and 'disunity' is always evil. However, this particular split was forced upon Labourism quite unwittingly and unwillingly, and in a fashion which is bound to be maximally disadvantageous to

the *left* (both inside the Labour Party and outside it). It resulted, in fact, in the formation of a new leadership for the social-democratic right wing—around Jenkins and Thompson—and in a general strengthening of that faction's fibre and spirit⁷¹. Thus, Labour's nationalist opposition simply accelerated the *prise de conscience* of a future 'Europeanist' élite—so that the only group to inherit anything of political value from the episode is (as one would expect) that already standing on European terrain.

Thus, Labour's sad and self-destructive role in the great debate corresponded to an underlying historical logic, as much as did that of ruling-class Conservatism. Only, it was a logic of the past—of the nation and the national interest as traditionally conceived, of the self-contained political system within which Labourism had grown up and evolved all its most characteristic reflexes. The ruling class had at last moved away from these traditions a little: that is, towards a world where national 'sovereignty' will be openly relegated to the shelf of archaisms, and the British Constitution and Westminster Parliament, no longer be the First Wonder of the Universe. But the engine of Labourism continued to revolve in the void, impelled by yesterday's laws, betraying the class struggle according to the well-tried principles of nationalist polity. Such was its too well-trained nature.

But what of the extra-Labour left—the British revolutionary movements and the socialist intelligentsia? The fact is that these forces moved in harmony with the Labour Party on this issue, and supported its stand. In this way a left-wing political bloc was constituted in the nation, from which only the decidedly 'right-wing' social democrats of Labour's pro-Market group were excluded. Nearly all the national marxists were part of that bloc, in spite of their supposedly harder and more intellectually articulate traditions of class internationalism. Clearly most of the factors we have considered cannot apply in the same way to the intellectuals and least of all to marxist intellectuals committed to a theory one of whose claims is a grander, more complex, vision of history—an historical understanding capable of creating and supporting a certain distance from (and so a certain judgement of) the events and passions of the political moment. So what logic moved them in 1971 to add their near-unanimous voice to the wrong side of the 'great debate'?

⁷¹ In general, the Common Market schism is only partly between 'left' and 'right' in the classical Labourist sense. Far too many right-wing and centrist leaders joined the anti-Market movement for this to be an adequate explanation. It corresponds more closely to a split between old 'party men' (with a strong phalanx of opportunists and right-wing populists around them) and 'new men' of bourgeois origin less dependent on the party machine and the Old Labourist spirit. This corresponds exactly to the trends analysed by Hindess, above. The 'old faithfuls' (both right and left) of Labour national-socialism and those who thought they still needed the old cow for career motives were on one side—except for a few pensioners like Lord George-Brown—while the *nouvelle vague* of middle-class professionals (much closer in both appearance and spirit to continental social-democracy) stood on the other.

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VII The Intellectuals: Gemeinschaft and the Iron Heel

'An integration of Europe, whatever its precise form . . . (has) reason on its side; but the natural human egotisms of interest and emotion; of locality, class and occupation; of regional loyalties and national pride, will rally to resist it.'

R. H. Tawney, *The Western Political Tradition* (1949)

'Constructeurs de l'Europe, ne vous y trompez pas: tous les sectaires du pittoresque sont contre vous.'

Julien Benda, *Discours à la nation européenne* (1931)

1971 was also a year in which there prevailed a distinct common mood within the left-wing intelligentsia. At no time after May could one fail to be aware of the existence of such a climate. It was definitely *de rigueur* to be anti-Market. The fact tended to be taken for granted. As we shall see even the revolutionary left participated in this consensus, apparently sharing some common instinct with the Labour left and the CPGB. The European question became, quite naturally, one of the critical ways (as far as the events of the moment were concerned, *the* critical way) of defining the sense of 'left' in Britain. Innumerable articles and editorial statements helped this self-definition on its way. But it is doubtful to what extent the extra-Labour left's basic position was formed by these. Rather, they seemed to emanate from and reflect it in various ways, helping to define farther a mind already made up.

There are difficulties in trying to define a climate. However, the 'typical' position of the unattached, independent left on the topic was perhaps something like this: 'Of course, one doesn't want to be nationalistic, but . . .' what *is* the point of encouraging the formation of still another Super-State? Wouldn't such a New Leviathan be even farther away from people and community than what we have already? Bigness is bad, as it were. Whether the problem was viewed in an optic of 'class' or not seemed to make little difference: the new super-state would be an enemy equally of working-class organization and of local or 'community' ('grass-roots') action. It may one day be armed with nuclear weapons, and so 'a threat to peace'. And of course it would be nakedly 'capitalist' in outlook: why support a huge monopoly-capitalist cartel created in the interests of big business and banks? Possibly the most general consensus view was simply that Europe—whether construed as State, capitalism, 'bureaucracy', 'technocracy', or power and world influence—stood for the wrong general political direction. It meant a movement towards the big and abstract, the 'impersonal', whereas politics ought to be moving towards the concrete and local: person, community or class. Was it not this sense, more than any other factor, which joined in common opposition the editorialists of the *New Statesman*, unattached socialists, traditional marxists, anarchists, communitarians, pacifists, undergrounders, and other elements of the intellectual left?

What was the source, the true *raison d'être* of this common view?

One may be reasonably certain that it did not come directly from well-known intellectual statements of 'the case against', like Professor Kaldor's.⁷²

Reliable prophecies of doom and professorial statements on the madness to come were in demand in 1971. On the left, the thirst for gloom was such as to transform academic rambling into an inspired vision of national apocalypse. What was the reason for this mildly lunatic character of the anti-Market movement?

The Iron Heel

We noticed above that one of the most common—and strangest—ideas found in the Labour-left anti-Market movement was that of Europe's being somehow more *capitalist* in nature than Great Britain and the British State. The Common Market nations are either more capitalist than Britain, or they are capitalist in a more sinister sense; while the Community's Brussels institutions represent the bureaucratic heart of darkness. It would hardly be correct to call this a theory: a 'theory' of the Common Market, in a marxist (or any other) sense would be worked out through some dialectical and polemical process of study, critique, assertion, and counter-assertion, and so on. There is—to the best of the author's knowledge—only one theory of the

⁷² 1971 saw no serious tract comparable to that written by Michael Barnett Brown and John Hughes in 1961, *Britain's Crisis and the Common Market*. Nor is this surprising. For the nub of their eloquent argument was that socialists should stay out of Europe to give British 'socialist planning' another chance: it hinged upon the possibility of a new left-inclined Labour government trying to implement a national-socialist economic programme. And of course, in 1964, one did. Seven years later, faith of this order was confined to a few straitjackets and the editorial *Equipe* of Crossman's *New Statesman*. It was possible to parrot some of the slogans and ideas of *Britain's Crisis* in 1971—but not to restore the intellectual conviction and moral vigour which had animated them. Instead, the scene was dominated largely by one article of Professor Kaldor's, 'The Truth About the Dynamic Effects'. This appeared in the *New Statesman* (12 March), and later copies were distributed by the Common Market Safeguards Campaign along with a number of its *Bulletins* containing the famous warnings about 'The Threat to British Food and Drink' ('The end of British beer as we know it', 'British sausages would have to change', etc) and a Gothic-script 'Petition to the Queen's most Excellent Majesty' urging her to intervene personally in the situation. The article concluded its sombre publishing history within the covers of *Dustiness or Debuton* (July 1971), an essay-collection which, in retrospect, looms like some extinct volcano over the instant-dross publishing landscape of the Great Debate. But then, some low comedy attached to the Professor's study from the outset. It had been composed, in fact, as a comment on the White Paper of February 1970—part of the Labour government's preparations for another entry attempt. In a more rational world—one may feel—to have been an architect of the Wilsonian economic programme would have been enough to spell out a man's cultural oblivion. Yet the sleep of reason was such that Kaldor's article became what one journalist called 'the Anti-Common Market White Paper'. I have had to omit a longer analysis of it here for reasons of space; but the decision was eased by the belief that, in any case, very few people must actually have read the essay (still less wrestled through its Appendices). Had they done so, they would surely have noticed that it was not a political argument against joining the Common Market at all; that it presented no alternative, economic or political, to doing so; that even its narrowly economic arguments ('We shall be the Northern Ireland of Europe', etc) were soggy with ambiguities; and that there was not a syllable of socialist thought in it.

Common Market in this sense.⁷³ What one has to do with is rather an 'ideal type', elaborated with little dialectical critique. According to it the Common Market is in essence a capitalist conspiracy whose form inclines to bureaucracy and 'technocracy': the beginning of the capitalist dictatorship described in Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, as it were—the direct reign of pure capital, divested of its old mediating illusions like parliament, religion, the nation, and so forth. In the left-wing side of the great debate, this idea was (at least implicitly) counterposed to another: the ideal type of what must be defended against the Iron Heel—that is, (approximately) what we have already, the more comfortable and indirect reign of capital through old friends like Parliament, Oxford and Cambridge, the Labour Party, the Royal National Horse Show, Professors Kaldor and Balogh, *The Times*, and many others.

Nowhere is this dichotomy of ideal types spelt out more plainly than in the pamphlet *The Common Market: Why Britain Should Not Join*, by the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Great Britain, John Gollan. For Gollan, Community Europe is 'the monopolists' dream and the monopolists' creation' (p. 14). It is ruled by grim abstractions very different from the homely visages we hold dear: 'The supranational apparatus and directing bodies of the Common Market are in effect a gigantic bureaucracy over and above the national governments with the elected Parliaments exercising no control whatsoever . . .' (p. 6).⁷⁴ An instrument of the trusts, the Common Market is 'anti-planning, anti-socialist, anti-working class' (p. 1). There is no use talking about possible evolution of the Strasbourg parliament—of the sort Amendola looks forward to, in *I comunisti e l'Europa*—because, in such a federal assembly, the British population would be merely represented in the same proportion as the Italians, the Dutch, etc. 'as one sixth of the population of 300 millions involved'. Simply not good enough. 'We would be virtually sunk without trace', Gollan concludes dolefully. In contrast to this fate of hapless anonymity in the continental horde, we have, at the moment, our own parliament. Under the heading 'Parliament No Longer Supreme', Mr Gollan does not hesitate to quote the last of the Old Whigs, that crowning authority on the British Constitution, Sir Ivor Jennings: 'The cornerstone of Britain's political constitution is the sovereignty of Parliament. Sir Ivor Jennings has said, "the supremacy of Parliament is the constitution". . . The pro-marketeters are prepared to sacrifice British sovereignty to enter the Market . . . For them profit comes before country. This is something, which when fully grasped, the British people, we are sure, will never tolerate' (p. 20). Without our Constitution—the most successful device of social conservatism known to European history—it stands to reason that our Socialism is doomed: 'British control of the economic life of Britain . . . would virtually cease to exist. In other words the type of economic counter programme

⁷³ Perhaps the most useful introduction to this is Ernst B. Haas's *The Uniting of Europe*; it is essential to read the Preface to the second edition (1968) first of all. The book contains a bibliography of other contributions to this eminently bourgeois-academic theory, 'functional integrationism'.

⁷⁴ In 1971, the employees of the Common Market Commission were approximately one fifteenth of the number working in our British Ministry, the Department of Health and Social Security.

now demanded by the left would be impossible once we were in the Common Market'.⁷⁵

There is little space here to discuss Gollan's picture of doom. But there is little that could be said anyway. What he writes about the Common Market is either simply wrong (and based upon lack of elementary study of its history) or else platitudinous. For example, the conception of the relationship of Common Market institutions to the economic basis of European capitalism is wrong, in the sense of preposterously mechanical and misleading; the idea that a Dr. Mabuse-like clique directs operations on behalf of the 'super trusts' in Brussels is farcical. On the other hand, it is not mistaken but truistic to assert that the Common Market is capitalist in nature. How could a union of six or ten capitalist national states be anything else? That the European Community is in some sense an emanation of European bourgeois society, and at once product and servant of the European capitalist system, really goes without saying. So does the fact that it is (like the Great-British State and Constitution) 'anti-planning, anti-socialist, anti-working class'.

But then, what seems to be the rational question for any socialist less than permanently thunderstruck by the revolutionary possibilities of the British parliamentary system is: which of these two sets of capitalist conditions, the national or the Common Market, offers the best future environment for revolutionary thought and activity? One cannot say that Gollan fails to answer the question. It never crosses the mental horizons of his pamphlet even to ask it seriously. He contents himself with stating that 'The advance to socialism . . . would be very much more difficult in the Common Market of the trusts' (p. 2). Since the advance to socialism—as envisaged by his party's own philosophy—has proved to be not difficult but impossible in the Great Britain of the banks, here is black comedy indeed. He was speaking—one should not forget—after the disorderly retreat from any semblance of socialism in 1964–70, and after the electoral annihilation of his party in June 1970. Yet his contention is that, bad as things may sometimes look, there is a sort of hope and socialist potential built-in to the British national arena. Where?

How does this kind of faith differ from the general left-wing or popular nationalism mentioned previously—with its unshakeable (because irrational) conviction of the quasi-magic potential of 'our' nation and our own folk-ways? The Communist Party of Great Britain conducted a campaign of shameless and outrageous chauvinism as its contribution to the grand debate, through pamphlets, the

⁷⁵ The reference is of course to the Communist Party's manifesto *The British Road to Socialism*, which has been the guideline of party activity for nearly twenty years. See Bill Warren's 'The Programme of the CPGB—a Critique' in *NLA* No 63 (Sept-Oct 1970). The author observes that two of the three cornerstones of the document's strategy tie it firmly to the main body of labour's evolutionist 'national-socialism': 'The conception of Labour-Communist unity, with the left having won power in the Labour Party, as the political-institutional basis . . . and the conception of a *permanently transitional* to socialism as the key to the seizure of state power by the working class' (p. 28). This is why Sir Ivor Jennings has his rightful place in the world-view of British Communism.

Morning Star, and numerous meetings. Like Labourism, it could not resist the momentary mass unpopularity of the Common Market; but unlike Labourism it had no pro-Market faction, and could commit any excess it pleased. The historic function of the main marxist group in Great Britain was, obviously to lead the mass movement.⁷⁶ Scripture sanctioned the aim, as did the more practical need to make up ground lost in the 1970 shipwreck and conceal the gangrene of *The British Road to Socialism*.

In this sense, the situation of the Communist Party was basically not unlike that of the Labour Party. In the political cactus land, the lost kingdom of 1971, these fossil relics of British Socialism could only lean unwillingly together—as so often in the past—groping jointly for a little life amid the dregs of nationalism. Both were engaged on surviving the end of the geological era which had nourished them. And for both, the law of survival entailed the absolute necessity of *not* distinguishing the right from the wrong in the 'mass movement' then in course. That movement comprised (and confused together in the way one would expect) an economic class struggle against the offensive of British capital, against inflation, unemployment, and the industrial relations act; and a deep-rooted nationalistic resentment, only recently stirred up and envenomed during the years of Powell's ascendancy. What counted for the national and institutional left was to sanctify that confusion at all costs; to pretend that the class struggle rightly took the form of defending the nation against Conservative betrayal of it; and so to regain some control over, and suck a little more life out of, the mass movement in course. In the event, 'national' marxism proved to have almost as much interest in the lie as national social-democracy.

Yet few left intellectuals are really attracted by Gollan's creaking Stalinism, any more than they are by Professor Kaldor's doubtful wrestle with the National Account-Book. These nonetheless furnished useful alibis (of marxism and economic science respectively) for a collective project already in existence. What that was may be gathered—paradoxically—from a curious *lacuna* in the positions of Gollan, Kaldor, and most other anti-Europeanist tracts.

While these harped constantly on the theme of parliament and sacred

⁷⁶ The justificatory texts are those which have always 'supported' the GPGS's strategy of alliance with Labourism: e.g. 'The Communists . . . are, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others'. They 'have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole' and 'fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class', etc. (*Communist Manifesto*, sects. II and IV). If the immediate general interest happens to be *national sovereignty*, then one had better be advanced and resolute about it. What of that awkward qualification which Marx made the *first* distinguishing mark of the Communist, in relation to the other 'working-class parties', namely: 'In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality'? Easy! The common interest of the entire proletariat is peace—or what Gollan calls *All-European Co-operation*, east-west trade, the All-European Security Conference, and so on. This is (exactly as in *I communisti e l'Europa*) Soviet foreign policy, still seen after all these years as a force and interest 'independent of all nationality'.

political traditions, they said little about *culture*. The British 'way of life' was mentioned a good deal. But (Westminster apart) it tended to be concretized as butter and kippers rather than as Renan's 'âme spirituelle'. To anyone acquainted with weaker or more precarious cultures, this absence could not fail to appear odd. Compare (e.g.) the British position to that of the Irish left as represented by Anthony Coughlan's *The Common Market: Why Ireland Should not Join* (1970, re-edited 1971). Coughlan's section on the European menace to Ireland's distinctive cultural inheritance—to its 'will to survive as a cultural entity'—found little echo on the British left.⁷⁷

It would probably be wrong to ascribe such decent reticence to mere philistinism. It was due less to doubts about the cultural problematic than to the British intelligentsia's superb lack of doubt on the subject. Criticizing the notion that inside Europe national-cultural 'identity' will be a valid substitute for independence, Mr Coughlan snaps—'A nation which is independent does not have to worry about its identity. Its identity is clear for all to see because its institutions, policies and cultural values are its own and not those of other nations . . .' But in Great Britain—or in *England* at least—intellectuals rarely fall into this sort of touchy defensiveness. They take for granted an extremely strong national-cultural 'identity'. It is easy for them to merge this personality quite naturally with the country's 'way of life' and its traditional forms of State and hegemony: the magic continuum extends effortlessly from the Queen and Sir Ivor Jennings down to the vexed problem of the sausage. They can scarcely imagine the uncertainty of intellectuals who, because they stand upon an ambiguous or disintegrating national basis, are forced to compensate for their alienation. Such a well-founded nationalism of the spirit is normally so much stronger than the various regional or social-class dialects located within it, that it has little need of self-consciousness. It is not a substitute for an insecure or half-dead national life-style. It is rarely the effort to escape from, or wage a running battle against, the prevalent 'way of life'.

On the whole, it belongs within the national house, and feels instinctively that there is something unnecessary—something 'in bad taste', even a little dangerous—in fussing self-consciously over threats to the family's cultural heirlooms.⁷⁸ The 'left' of the intellectual

⁷⁷ All the arts, for Coughlan, are 'distinctively national' in form, content and inspiration, and there is no 'European culture' apart from them. The Iron Heel's aim is to stamp out these well-guarded parterres of national flora. Culture and socialism will die together. 'With national cultures wilting, the tawdry products of the international entertainments industry would have a free field', broods the author, 'to the rootless technocrats and business interests who are the chief exponents of European integration, these things are outdated and dangerous; but they are the roots of Europe's culture. Those who value culture will seek to nourish and foster those roots' (p. 30). For both culture and socialism therefore, the vital slogan of today is: Leave our roots alone!

⁷⁸ Two valuable recent studies have sought to analyse the weaknesses of this conservative national culture, Perry Anderson's 'Components of the National Culture', *NLR* No. 50 (July–Aug 1968), and T. Eagleton's *Excuses and Enigmas* (1970). Both show how it lacks a self-critical 'centre' and has been sustained to an astonishing degree by cultural immigrants. Of course these 'weaknesses' are the inverse of its

spectrum, as 1971 showed, tends to treasure this solid, organic identity even more than outright conservatives. As soon as it is threatened they drop the usual family feuds and retreat instinctively inside it, without wasting time on continental commiserations over *Kulturgeschichte*. They require no proof, or even argument, that it all hangs together as one, that there truly is a 'community' stretching from the House of Lords to the British breakfast, and taking in Dickens and D. H. Lawrence on the way. Their underlying dependence comes to the fore. With the whole historic fabric threatened, was this a time to be burning holes in the carpet or scribbling on the walls?

This very comprehensive and solid cultural nationalism may be popular and (in England's historical circumstances) even natural to the left. It is not, however, a 'left-wing' phenomenon in the sense of having any special or logical rapport with socialism. To appreciate this, one need only look at the other end of the spectrum, the national-cultural right. On 2 November 1971, some days after the vote on Common Market entry, a cry of despair found its way into the correspondence page of *The Times*. It was from no other than Professor F. R. Leavis himself, the father of the Cambridge School, the inspirer of a great deal of the modern nation's cultural *Weltanschauung*. The pretext of the Professor's letter was the fashionable issue of pollution, which *The Times* (in common with everyone else) had chosen to be responsibly alarmed about at the time. Why worry about the poisonous effluvia of the modern economy, asked Leavis, when so few are willing to face the real problem? The trouble with civilization is not factory waste, but factories; not the aberrations and faults of the modern economy, but economic growth itself. 'When we others . . . point out that, pollution apart, to make economic growth an end in itself is self-defeating and leads to disaster', he moaned (referring of course to fellow-members of the Human-World commune), 'we know that we shall not get even from you the recognition that a serious consideration has been raised'. Where does the Common Market fit into this darkening perspective? 'In a civilization in which economic growth is universally treated as an end in itself . . . any national identity worth preserving is rapidly disappearing—a process that "entering Europe" will beyond question accelerate. No one suggests that Europe is going to generate in compensation any kind of "identity" that the United States hasn't . . .' The Common Market, like the USA, stands for the triumph of the Professor's old enemy, Utilitarianism. It represents the death of 'culture'. Anonymous, impersonal, materialistic, Common Market Europe is appreciably closer to the direct rule of pure capital, divorced from all human considerations. It will complete the prostitution of

strength. The absence of critical centre and distanced consciousness reflects the absence of an 'intelligence' in the classical sense; but this traditional absence is only the negative-image of the intellectual class's integration, of its powerful *presence* within the body of conservative society. It has tended to be 'fully employed' by this body in a number of organic functions. Thus, even when intellectually ridiculous or fifty years behind the times (choking over sociology in the 1960s, e.g.), it remains strong in the political-national sense relevant here. It was of course this strength of a rooted and hegemonic conservative tradition which attracted intellectual *divagations* in the first place and drew them into its service (on this subject Lady Namier's recent *Life* of Sir Lewis Namier provides valuable insight).

leisure by phoney mass-produced 'culture', and destroy 'that widespread creativity which maintains a living culture and with it the significance necessary to human life'. There may be some chance that society will cure pollution, notes the Professor in conclusion; there is very little that it will reform its own degenerate nature: 'We others know that *our* cause, though not less vital, is more desperate. . .'

Thus, here too we find national identity naturally linked to 'creativity', 'living culture', 'human' standards, 'significance', and anti-material or anti-economic values. For Coughlan and other left-nationalists the customs-post still holds out a little hope; Dr Leavis is less optimistic—his cultural studies have convinced him the sickness is here already, the world of human beings already an embattled remnant. But these are no more than nuances of disaccord. There is a basic consensus which perceives nation and culture as—so to speak—natural partners opposed to the disastrous spread of capitalist internationalism (or at least, of an economistic and so faceless or 'inhuman' cosmopolitan order). On the one side, 'roots' and an organic and meaningful culture; on the other, what J. B. Priestley has called 'these big smoothed-out blocks of standardised living', more motorways but less significance, a mere administration of things. At one point Coughlan remarks that opposition to the Common Market *ought* to embrace both left and right, both socialists and conservatives (p. 8, op. cit.). One sees what he means.

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

It seems to be the fashion amongst progressives and radicals, not to speak of Labour Party opportunists, to oppose Britain's entry to the Common Market', wrote a diarist in the anarchist paper *Freedom* in July 1971.⁷⁹ Some help may be found in defining this fashion from one of the classics of sociological thought, Ferdinand Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*. This study first appeared in 1887; but its central idea (one recent English commentator has noted) remains a seminal one, 'still as important, both theoretically, and as an indicator of practical social problems, as it ever was'.⁸⁰

Tönnies was concerned to define and contrast two 'ideal types' of human society. Society typified by *Gemeinschaft* or community is natural human society, founded upon the ties of family, kinship shared labour and territory. It is based on 'naturally rooted' relationships, which issue in instinctively accepted common customs and traditions, and are voiced in a natural language or 'mother-tongue'. Natural community is in this sense the village, the society of a stable

⁷⁹ Vol 32, no 22, 17 July. The writer, Bill Dwyer, was sounding a rare note of warning against the fashion—*Freedom* itself had printed a leading piece in the same issue denouncing the Common Market as 'just another dirty trick played upon the workers by those in "authority"' and joined Labour's opportunists in demanding a 'popular referendum' on the question.

⁸⁰ R. Fletcher, *The Making of Sociology* (1971) vol. 2, p. 28. An English translation of *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* appeared in 1957, as *Community and Association* (trans. C. Loomis).

neighbourhood—at most, that of a small town. It is rural rather than urban. It is (like the family) not necessarily democratic, and relies on common experience and shared values to balance its inequalities. It rests upon ‘natural will’ (*Wesenwille*) expressive of real human nature, and laws ‘in which human beings are related to each other as natural members of a whole’. *Gemeinschaft* stands (so to speak) for the concrete and personal, the ‘fully human’, as against the abstract and impersonal; for habit and instinct, as against artifice and calculation; for the close, the familiar, the inherited, as against the remote, the intrusive novelty, the alien way of life; for the tribe, as against the metropolis.

The other great category, *Gesellschaft*, represents the antithesis of intimate natural community. It is unnatural, artificial ‘society’, founded upon commerce, egotism, and the law of contract. Tönnies was much influenced by Hobbes, and his depiction of *Gesellschaft* is like Hobbes’ state of the ‘war of each against all’: it is the society of restless individuals who have torn themselves out of the organic mould—‘severed the umbilical cord uniting them with their fellow man’, in Marx’s phrase—and are governed by ambition and the profit-motive rather than by custom and piety.⁸¹ Society in this sense means the ‘impersonality’ of great cities and enterprises, the abstract equality of law, the ‘indifference’ of the State and bureaucracy. It is founded not upon the ‘natural will’ of human beings, but on ‘rational will’ (*Willkür*), deliberate choice and calculation, the instrumentality of means and ends. *Gesellschaft* is associated with the development of science, of modern technology, and of the mass media—whereas *Gemeinschaft* or community was associated with art, the natural flowering of the imagination, and a ‘culture’ rooted in real experience. Summing up the contrast of these ideal types Fletcher writes: ‘Whereas “communities” were well-defined, unique, specific; and contained the inherent logic of wanting to *conserve* their own loved traditions, to *defend* their own established boundaries (in every sense: geographical, cultural, etc.); these mercantile, contractual relationships of *Gesellschaft* which had to follow interest in terms of abstract calculations of quantities, prices, etc., contained an inherent logic of “universality”. Their dimensions were global and all-embracing. The “extent of the market” knew no bounds other than those of the competitive possibilities of factors of production and consumer’s demand. The “global” extent of *Gesellschaft* was thus, quite strictly, the making of the entire world into a “market” of calculated associations; a market which transcended and cut across all *Gemeinschaft* unities within it. . .’⁸²

Tönnies was careful to point out that his categories were ideal abstractions, and not simple historical portraits: to some extent, all the societies we know anything of are *both Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*. Yet no one who reads his work carefully could be deceived. They are not mere ahistorical yardsticks for measuring real societies; it is quite clear that on the whole *Gemeinschaft* represented the more ‘natural’ society of the past and *Gesellschaft* the modern, capitalist

⁸¹ *Capital* Ch. 1, Section 4.

⁸² Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

society which was everywhere destroying the past. Tönnies believed that the latter category was coming to predominate over the former, even to destroy it (as in the German industrial revolution which constituted the immediate background of his thought). *Gesellschaft* for him has a content quite similar to Hegel's category of 'civil society' and to Marx's 'bourgeois society'.⁸³ The future lay with it, in a transformation of the whole world, at once rational and deadly, where abstract and material 'progress' was accompanied by human and cultural loss or impoverishment. If ever the more humanly satisfying social order of *Gemeinschaft* is to arise again, it can only (and doubtfully) be created as socialism, somewhere on the far side of this vast transformation. In this sense, the romantic pessimism of the conception is as unmistakable as its 'historical' character. The ultimate aim of the bourgeois society and State, wrote Tönnies, is 'to abolish the multiplicity of states and substitute for it a single world republic, coextensive with the world market, which would be ruled by thinkers, scholars, and writers and could dispense with means of coercion other than those of a psychological nature . . . The existence of natural states (communities) is but a temporary limitation of boundaryless *Gesellschaft*'.⁸⁴ One has only to substitute 'bureaucrats' or 'technocrats' for 'thinkers, scholars and writers', to obtain a recognizable picture of Gollan's Iron Heel, Leavis's Utilitarianism, Coughlan's international tawdriness, or Priestley's 'smoothed-out blocks'. The fate of culture in the world market-cum-republic is a grim one. 'The entire culture', wrote Tönnies, 'has been transformed into a civilization of state and *Gesellschaft*, and this transformation means the doom of culture itself if none of its scattered seeds remain alive and again bring forth the essence and idea of *Gemeinschaft*, thus secretly fostering a new culture amidst the decaying one. . .'⁸⁵

Commenting upon Tönnies and his place in German history, Ralf Dahrendorf has underlined the reactionary sense of this 'untranslatable dichotomy' and its 'cultural pessimism'. The romanticism of *Gemeinschaft* at once idealizes and suspends history, and implicitly condemns modernity *en bloc* (even science and technology, those dubious by-products of bourgeois rationality). He who tries to stop social change will soon be overwhelmed by it . . . the social-psychological law according to which pressure from without produces solidarity within was abused for the creation of an unreal world . . . Possibly the success of the German ideology of social classlessness and national community consisted less in the power of conviction it carried than in its advocates' ability to distract people's interest from the immediate, real, and acutely threatening and turn it to the more distant and obscure. Thus society and its classes disappeared behind the nation and the

⁸³ See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (Knox trans), p. 189, 354; Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (trans. & ed. O'Malley, 1970), Intro. p. xlvii, and (e.g.) pp. 76-80. More generally, Tönnies' distinction is only one of many such banal dichotomies to be found in sociology from Comte to Talcott Parsons.

⁸⁴ *Community and Association*, pp. 256-7.

⁸⁵ *Community and Association*, p. 270.

fictitious community of its people'.⁸⁶ The successes of the German ideology of national community are indeed well known. Yet Dahren-dorf is surely wrong in attributing these ideas to 'the folklore of German self-consciousness' alone. They belong (albeit in different forms) to the English ideology as well as to the German one.⁸⁷ As a matter of fact, they seem to be endemic to romanticism as a general mode of sensibility and thought. Since romanticism—by its inclination towards the concrete and particular—became naturally allied to the development of 19th century nationalism, and so divided into a number of distinct cultures, its main themes have been enormously diversified and disguised. Nevertheless, something like the twin categories of Tönnies certainly came into the world with the romanticism of the later 18th century, and has haunted European culture ever since.

The politically crucial point is the identification of romantic *Gemeinschaft* with the nation. This, surely, is the shared terrain of the left and right wing oppositions to Europe. The 1971 Anti-Common Market campaign furnished a perfect example of surviving ability to 'distract people's interest from the immediate, real, and acutely threatening' and to make 'society and its classes disappear behind the nation and the fictitious community of its people'. And the crux of the operation lay in a still strong residual tendency to identify nation and natural community. That is, even though most of the time intellectuals on the left perceive their desired *Gemeinschaft* as e.g.—the working class, the labour movement, the marxist *groupuscule*, the 'underground', the rural commune or the ecology movement, it was still both feasible and necessary to fall back upon the nation in an emergency. Most of the time the nation appears as *Gesellschaft*, the enemy of their ideal (as the capitalist State, the 'rationalizer', bureaucracy, the fuzz, etc). Then abruptly, when threatened, when its sovereignty is about to be ceded and a new and wider perspective opens up, it is imagined as *Gemeinschaft* again. The known evil, eclipsed in fantasy by a greater one, becomes almost a friend. One had better defend the old fellow after all. Twenty years are passed in fulminating indignation against the heartless British State, its money-grubbing rulers, the nauseous materialism

⁸⁶ *Society and Democracy in Germany* (1967) pp. 127–31. A different interpretation, seeking to refurbish the more abstract and obcurantist aspects of Tönnies from the point of view of American academic sociology, will be found in the introduction to his essays *On Sociology: Pure, Applied and Empirical* ed. W. Cahnman and R. Heberle (1971).

⁸⁷ For example, that most influential of modern left-wing cultural essays, Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958), is in certain respects simply a socialist revision and representation of Tönnies' theses. Its very title is almost a translation of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (in some ways a better one than Loomis's 'Community and Association'). It surveys the 'scattered seeds' of English *Gemeinschaft* culture and seeks to show how a 'new culture' has in fact been both secretly and openly fostered against the tide of *Gesellschaft*. Compared to Tönnies, it is both class-conscious and sturdily optimistic in outlook; yet Williams' socialist optimism has constantly to wrestle against the inherent 'cultural pessimism' of the romantic categories which he employs (a struggle embodied in the very style of his book and its successor, *The Long Revolution*). Thus, nearly three-quarters of a century after Tönnies, in another part of Europe, national left-wing romantics like Williams and Edward Thompson still struggle to escape from their own version of this conservative 'folklore of self-consciousness'.

of the age, etc.; then, suddenly, one is defending them all passionately against the 'sell-out'. Somehow or other, when one gets right down to it, the Great-British nation-state seems at least *more* propitious to whichever *Gemeinschaft* one holds dear than a European Iron Heel would be.

In the course of this dazing backward plunge, one could hardly help noticing with amazement how—e.g.—the central organs of British 'culture' and 'way of life' were abruptly transfigured. During the 1960s there had appeared a growing flood of books and articles devoted to criticism of the British Parliament and the British Constitution. Ideas and proposals for reforming them were so numerous and varied that it is difficult to list them satisfactorily. From the point of view of even the mildest liberalism they had begun to seem undemocratic, full of faults, out of tune with the times. Under the Wilson government, as the deathly pallor which had begun to creep over them assumed a greenish tinge, the need for 'revitalizing' democracy and restoring popular 'confidence in Parliament' became a commonplace. Yet in the anti-European crusade, as by a miracle, they rose in glory from the dead. In 1970 the doctors shook their heads: as with the Labour Party, the morgue looked like the next stop. By mid-1971, as Michael Foot's battle for British freedoms reached its peak, they were apparently restored to Gladstonian vigour. The palsied, disintegrating organs of class dictatorship were resurrected as 'our Parliament', 'our right to decide our own affairs', the staff of the people, the hard-won rights of Free-born Englishmen, and so forth. *Tribune* and the *Morning Star* vibrated with new-found faith in the British Way. The problem of reforming bourgeois misrule in Great Britain had turned out, in fact, to be extremely simple. As far as a large part of the left is concerned, all one has to do is threaten to take it away (or slightly diminish its authority).

As soon as this happens, a national *Volks-gemeinschaft* is at least partially recreated. Discussing the origins of modern nationalism in the ideas of Rousseau and the French Revolution, Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out how (in what was then a novel sense)—'The "nation", which is the sovereign people, cannot tolerate intermediate and sectional interests and corporations between itself and its members. But by implication this very elimination of other centres of loyalty makes the relation of loyalty of citizens to "nation" the only valid, and therefore the strongest, of his emotional-political commitments. It is the content of the "civic religion" which the community needs. There is no difference between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, because the only valid *Gemeinschaft* is the *Gesellschaft*, organised as the polity . . .'⁸⁸ Modern nations were built up by the transference of older regional and group loyalties to this new, all-powerful centre. At the same time—in the same movement—the spirit of once universal religions was (so to speak) brought down to earth, in the shape of the new civic or civil 'religion' of the nation-state.

⁸⁸ 'Some Reflections on Nationalism', in *Imagination and Precision in the Social Sciences*, essays in honour of J. P. Nettl (1972).

The most striking and lucid example of this movement in action was perhaps the great 'federation movement' of the French Revolution in 1789-90, when the different regions of the *ancien régime* spontaneously assembled to swear allegiance (in religious style) to the new, re-born nation.⁸⁹ The aim of the process was not to eliminate or destroy all other loyalties (whether more particular or more universal in nature), but to subordinate them all to this, the *most* valid and fundamental commitment. Nationalism could not (in a literal sense) take the place of these other communities, although at crisis-moments in a nation's history it almost does. More normally its function is that of the 'community' which underlies and sustains all others: even when hidden from view, or quite taken for granted, it remains determining *en dernière instance*. Ultimately, it remains the 'secret' of an effectively working nation-state, because it is the structure through which *Gesellschaft* (mere society, the 'impersonal' State) becomes *Gemeinschaft* for its subjects or citizens.

In this context it is worth quoting some words by the most important theorist of European historical nationalism, Friedrich Meinecke. Writing two decades after Tönnies, in the flood-tide of imperialism, Meinecke (himself an outspoken German nationalist) also described the 'nation-building' process vividly: 'If the full consciousness of a great national community is once awakened and raised to an intense longing for national realization, then this longing is like a flood that pours itself into everything it can fill and is not satisfied until everything is nationalized that is at all capable of nationalization . . .'⁹⁰ Meinecke too observes that this implies a direct or immediate relationship between citizens and the new 'community': 'This process is basically a great extension of the individual personality and its sphere of life. The human being needs the community to sustain him and to receive his contributions in turn. The more autonomous, the more individualized he himself becomes, the larger the spheres of his receptivity and influence can be . . . and of all the great spheres of life that a man can enter, there is probably none that speaks so directly to the whole man as the nation, none that carries him so strongly, none that renders so faithfully his entire natural and intellectual being, none that can so readily be or become both macroanthropos and fully realized individual'. Referring to the individualism which accompanied the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment era just before the rise of modern nation-states, he goes on to note that this was a precondition of the latter: 'It is no coincidence that an era of individualistic strivings for freedom immediately preceded the era of modern national thought. The nation drank the blood of free personalities, as it were, to attain personality itself . . . everything the free and creative personality did served the nation by making its total life richer and more individual . . .'

Looking at Labourism we saw how the nation structure does not obliterate all conflict (which would require a perpetual frenzy of chauvinism), but resolves and 'defuses' it through a characteristic

⁸⁹ Carlton Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (1948) pp. 36-7.

⁹⁰ *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* (1907, Eng. trans. 1970) pp. 14-17.

process of alienation. Within this process, different visions of the nation ('left' and 'right', populist and conservative) constantly conflict, and are as regularly resolved—in the case of Great Britain's well-oiled bourgeois machinery—by victories for conservatism. Meinecke points out how the national 'personality' *has* to reproduce itself in this fashion: 'Within the nation itself different concepts of the nation come into conflict with each other, and each of them alone claims to represent the nation truly and properly. The fact that part of the nation unselfconsciously and sincerely regards itself as the core and essence of the entire nation is rooted in the very character of national life itself . . . In a certain sense the nation is always *pars pro toto* by nature, but it cannot, of course, do without the totality, any more than the head can do without the body'. With the development of the class struggle, the conflict sharpens and 'there is no end of doubt and struggle over that point'. The modern national state cannot aspire to 'nullify these contradictions and reduce the national culture to one level', but it can and must 'achieve a unified position in certain basic matters . . . a peace of God, as it were, for certain days of the national year'.

Much was said above about the ways in which the Great-British macroanthropos 'drinks the blood' of the left and the class and labour movements, and about the Anglican 'peace of God' kept in being by its vampirism. Meinecke's account omits many vital determinants of the nation-building process—it leaves out, for example, those economic and class factors which would stand at the centre of any marxist theory of the transition from 'cosmopolitanism to the national state'. Yet this is only to say that it is couched in the authentic, romantic terminology of nationalism itself. As such, in spite of faults, it conveys the most vivid historical impression of the rising tide of European nationalism, of how in its affirmation modern national consciousness drew life out of and subordinated all other *Gemeinschaften* to itself.

In the course of this rise, the nation triumphed over these other 'communities', religious, local, class, regional and professional: it carried them along with it—simultaneously transforming and edulcorating them—as their new and dominant condition of existence. To do so, it had also to triumph over the intellectuals (the process Benda was to refer to as 'la trahison des clercs'). What, in this perspective, is the significance of the left-wing *Volksgemeinschaft*, the 'national community' of the left concretized so dramatically by the move to enter Europe?

It is, surely, a characteristic episode of the *retreating* tide of European nationalism in our own day. As that tide advanced from the era of the French Revolution until its barbaric débâcle in fascism, national culture ousted the rational or religious universalism that formerly held sway, and made itself into the normal medium of political life. Now, as the tide recedes, the nature of that dominance becomes clearer in retrospect. It leaves stranded and exposed to the air those forms which it formerly covered. But how different is this out-going from the majestic rise Meinecke describes! The flood which poured in so irresistibly and 'nationalized everything' in the 19th century retreats slowly, reluctantly, amidst endless hesitation and incertitude. Its day is over; since the departure of de Gaulle in 1969, nothing has

broken its pattern of grey on grey. No comparable new force or passion has emerged to take its place, to hasten its end in Europe. And in this dim period of transition and uncertainty, much of its surviving strength derives—paradoxically—from those very movements and ideal forces which, formerly, it had to struggle so hard to assimilate and ‘nationalize’. It took generations of repression and conditioning to nationalize the working class and the intellectuals; but in the end this mobilization proved so successful that they now cling, almost instinctively, to the modes of thought and action that have become customary and fundamental. They have become, as it were, over-adapted to the conditions of the nation-state and nationalism.

The mediaeval English King Canute is supposed to have tried to halt the incoming tide by royal command; the modern English left (like many others in Europe) has tried to arrest the falling tide of national power and sovereignty, by appeal to the past and ‘popular struggle’. The process of decline was going on all the time, in fact, in the increasing stagnation and powerlessness of the 1950s and 60s. Yet just because it is so slow and uncertain—so negative in character—it was not experienced as much of a threat. Only the sudden ebb, the relatively dramatic tug of the waters which accompanied the British efforts at entry to the EEC, produced a clear sensation of what was occurring.

The sensation was, on each occasion, mainly one of loss (or even of impending doom) and not one of liberation. It was felt that the natural element was being taken away. Not only was the underlying ‘illusion of the epoch’ still strong—it was most resistant (in spite of their many alibis and disclaimers) in those social and political sectors once most alien to it. Instead of heaving a sigh of relief, and thinking that (at long last) the suffocating tutelage of the nation—in the 20th century an almost unmitigated disaster for the social revolution in Europe—might be near its end, they chose to ‘defend’ the fictitious nation-state *Gemeinschaft*. Instead of feeling that at last history might be moving in their sense again, they found it more natural to clutch at the familiar ‘personality’ of the nation and contrast its visage with an apocalyptic European *Gesellschaft*. Far from thinking that they were gaining a new freedom of movement, they imagined that their ‘roots’ were being cut. ‘Give us our roots’: is this slogan of crippling conservatism to remain a leitmotiv of socialist thought in the 1970s?

The aim of this argument is not to condemn these attitudes without understanding. Such condemnation could only be founded on abstract ‘anti-nationalism’, on an empty moralism that would be little more than the crude antithesis of the phenomena under review. It would be like (to take one example from hundreds) Leonard Woolf’s judgment in his introduction to Julius Braunthal’s *The Paradox of Nationalism* (1946). Braunthal saw the paradox of nationalism as lying in its uncanny fusion of noble creativity with destructive (and self-destructive) futility. But Woolf was hardly willing to allow it even this dimension of paradox. ‘The paradox has almost vanished from nationalism’, he wrote, ‘Any good that there may have been in it in the middle of last century has long ago been drained out of it by hatred, cupidity, brutality and war

. . . Nineteenth-century nationalism was born an anachronism, for it introduced into Europe the most violent centrifugal forces at the very moment when the logic of facts, the scientific, social, and economic development of the world made the centripetal action of internationalism necessary, if civilization was to endure . . . But if this is true, and nationalism was an 'anachronism' even in 1848, then the whole century that followed must appear as some sort of absurd mistake. This is a world in which (as it were) the 18th century ought never to have ended, and 'irrational' romanticism and nationalism ought never to have showed their heads. If they had (and have) no justification whatever, no historical *raison d'être*, then no inevitability, and so no tragedy, attaches to them. They represent not the Janus faces of a half-national civilization, able to achieve progress only at near-intolerable cost, but—a regrettable surrender to unreasonable emotions—like hatred and cupidity! This type of judgment expresses less the rational spirit of Enlightenment man (as that spirit actually existed historically) than a sort of latter-day caricature of it. Its internationalism is abstract, in the sense of deliberately (almost disdainfully) detached from a hopelessly self-contradictory reality.

Nevertheless—while avoiding any position of this kind—there is a point that must be made here. It concerns marxism in general, and the attitude of most British marxists towards the Common Market in particular. If one looks back to the earlier history of marxism, to all the great exponents of that tradition from Marx himself down to Trotsky, Luxemburg, Lenin and Gramsci, one finds that they incline invariably towards 'the inherent logic of universality'.⁹¹ They are (so to speak) theorists of *Gesellschaft*, not of *Gemeinschaft*. Nowhere in Europe is there a stronger tradition of contempt for folk-piety, cosy parochialism, tribal rootedness and well-watered custom—for 'the world of human nest-warmth . . . founded on the "will of nature"', as Dahrendorf calls it.⁹² This applied both to the real, original 'organic communities' which modern society upset and to the later factitious organism of the imperialist nation-states, with their pretence of being 'communities' of blood and custom. It applied equally to the idealized, village and the romanticized nation. Socialism, for all these thinkers, was not an enclave against the spread of *Gesellschaft*. It was not founded upon a local or regional or communal resistance to the advance of industries and markets, the rise of conurbations, and the triumph of science and technology. On the contrary, they assumed—even took for granted—that *only* these phenomena made socialism possible. Nor was this simply because the 'material abundance' of an industrialized society was required for the ending of class divisions, and for the political and cultural experiments of freedom. They also thought that the development of science-based industry could alone generate the

⁹¹ On this basic point it is necessary to distinguish these names from that of Lukács. His *History and Class Consciousness*, (1923, Eng. trans. 1970) and the line of thought descending from it through the Frankfurt school and Marcuse to certain ideas of the American New Left and the French *mouvement de mai* 1968, represents a late-romantic version of marxism much closer to Tönnies' own perspective. See L. Colletti, *Il marxismo e Hegel* (1969), p. 341; also Gareth Stedman Jones, 'The Marxism of the Early Lukács', *NLS* No. 70, (Nov-Dec 1971).

⁹² Dahrendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

social forces capable of breaking through to such a different order of things. Far from depending upon a reaction of 'human nature' or wounded corporate custom *against* modernity, socialism was imagined as deriving in essence from the altered humanity produced by modernity itself—that is, from new men, in new social classes, equipped with new needs and wishes. Classical marxism was aware of the cost of such 'progress' and its double-edged nature, but did not allow this awareness to impel it into either a romantic humanism or mere ruthlessness about the 'inevitable march' of economic history (where is the immense culture-shock of industrialism more passionately described than in *Capital*?). In fact—or so its main protagonists believed—marxism's virtue as a rational and dialectical system consisted in its power to both avoid and transcend easy, one-dimensional alternatives like these. It was capable of viewing things realistically, historically, and as a whole.

In this light, the warm embrace of national *Gemeinschaft* by British marxists (and similar episodes in the past in France and Italy) looks odd, to say the least of it. However comical, it was not wholly surprising or out of character for a typical representative of the national-left intelligentsia like Kenneth Tynan to believe that the main peril of entering the Common Market would be the 'enormous, possibly irreparable harm' this would bring to British Socialism. He continued (referring to Labour's pro-Common Market faction): 'It is sad that a wing of the party so rich in historians should not have reflected that the Common Market in its fullest state of development will be the most blatant historical vulgarity since the Thousand Year Reich . . . Hitler failed to realise the dream. The Market could come close to fulfilling it for him'. The message of recent history (vividly illustrated by the cases of Ireland and Great Britain, one imagines?) is that small countries are 'flexible and capable of change' while big ones like the USA and the USSR (and China?) are 'musclebound dinosaurs', inherently conservative and resistant to change. Inside Europe's 'capitalist fortress' the British would lose forever their 'freedom to choose the socialist path'.⁹³ There does, however, remain something surprising in the sight of parties and movements which claim descent from marxism joining in a chorus like this. As far as the principal marxist party, the CPGB, is concerned, this position is at least superficially explicable in terms of its long-standing strategy of seeking alliance with Labourism along the 'British road to socialism'. National sovereignty and community are obvious preconditions of any national path towards socialism. But what of the other marxist groups' most of them (after all) bitterly hostile to the CPGB and its claims to be the inheritor of marxist truth?

⁹³ Letter in *The Times*, 27 July 1971.

VIII The Marxist Nation: Buridan's Ass

'Socialists must be internationalists even if their working classes are not; socialists must also understand the nationalism of the masses, but only in the way in which a doctor understands the weakness or the illness of his patient. Socialists should be aware of that nationalism, but, like nurses, they should wash their hands twenty times over whenever they approach an area of the Labour movement infected by it'.

Isaac Deutscher, *On Internationalism and Internationalism in Marxism in our Times* (1972)

In 1971, almost as large a *rassemblement* of popular forces as one could wish for came together to oppose the Common Market. It included most of the trade unions, most of the working class, most of the Labour Party, the CPGB, the anarchists, the underground, the pacifists, the marxist *groupuscules*, and most of the 'unorganized' left-wing intelligentsia. What more could one ask for? Not only was nearly everybody in it: for once the left could count on harnessing the well-known potency of inter-class nationalism. Why should not the marxists function as 'vanguard' to this considerable *bloc* of forces, leading and radicalizing it according to the traditional formula?

However, there was something profoundly amiss in this situation. None of the marxist movements opted out of or opposed the anti-Market crusade. Yet none of them—with the possible exception of the CP—looked happy inside it. On every hand one found doubts, qualifications, and reservations. There are few political movements in Great Britain less given over to doubt and introspection than the trotskyist Socialist Labour League. During the great debate, however, its organ the *Workers Press* noticeably underplayed this theme. It was awarded a lowly place in the news, in comparison with Bangladesh or the Clyde shipyard occupations. It was certainly necessary to oppose entry—but only as part of the general struggle against the Heath government' and for the right motives. It was (i.e.) no less necessary to avoid petty-bourgeois chauvinism and narrow nationalism in the campaign.

Similar positions were taken up in a number of different accents by other marxist groups. As with *Workers Press*, the reason for opposition was both general hostility to the 'class government' of Toryism, and solidarity with the working class (well known to be strongly against the move). This note of *ouvrieriste* class solidarity was probably sounded most strongly in the maoist *The Worker*. The line of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) expressed 'the strong views of workers and their families all over the country . . . who have not been consulted about any of these steps to get Britain into an Economic Community established to strengthen European monopoly, capitalism against the workers of Europe. They need consult no one in the steps *they* will take to wreck the whole conception!' Here classism was so rhetorically pronounced as to drown out other considerations. Obviously, theoretical problems of nationalism do not impinge much upon a world where the workers *are* the nation in

The Worker's uncompromising sense (illustrated, in the same paper, by numerous references to China and Albania).

But groups with a more highly developed nervous system than the SLL and the CPB(M-L) could not cope so easily with the ancient, uncomfortable dilemma lying only a little way under the surface. The problem was that of a mass movement which was intensely and blatantly nationalist and yet had a definitely 'class' content and character. It was—in short—like Labourism itself. Long socio-political experience had fused the two things together, in the *praxis* of a national left. How could one climb into this seamless garment without being stifled by it? How could one 'support' the crusade—in all its onward rush, its heat and emotion, its natural polarization of everyone into a simple 'for' or 'against'—and save one's conscience with a few modest coughs of doubt? Imagine a spectator at a particularly bloody rugby match, who 'supported' his side with the same patriotic cries as everyone else, but broke off occasionally to say sternly: 'Not so much chauvinist frenzy down there, please! We can do without these excesses of petty-bourgeois aggression!' The position of marxists vis-à-vis the anti-Europe movement was worse than this. They were supposed to be actually playing, and to issue their reprimands, therefore, from the heart of the scrum. Indeed, as a theoretical 'vanguard' their aim was to *lead* the game in the very front line of the scrum—alternately striving, as it were, to touch down at the goalpost of National Sovereignty and to tell their striving fellow-players 'Down with petty bourgeois nationalism and flag-waving chauvinists!'⁹⁴

On the one hand—continued *Red Mole*—'Entry into the Common Market is opposed to both the immediate and the long-term class interests of the labour movement'. But on the other hand there was the disgusting way in which these interests were, in fact, being fought for: 'Michael Foot's bleatings about sovereignty', 'Eric Heffer's "socialism in one country"', and the sad fact that 'The multitude of views on the so-called "left" of the Labour Party . . . lack any scrap of socialist internationalism, or any policy for fighting against the Tories and European capitalists'. From one point of view, 'The EEC is a capitalist solution to capitalist problems' and will strengthen the ruling class. But from another—not less evident and cogent in the summer of 1971—'chauvinism is a vicious enemy which must be destroyed'. The unity re-forged by the anti-Market crusade could only be 'unity between . . . a rotten gang of career labour aristocrats and politicians in the Labour Party and trade unions, and the mass of trade unionists who are pressing their leaders for action.' Joseph admitted: 'This is a unity which holds no future for the working class, and one which must be rejected and fought against'.⁹⁵ In the IMG at least, one had both to participate in the movement *and* fight against it.

⁹⁴ Ben Joseph, *The Red Mole*, vol. 2 No. 10 (1 June 1971) & No. 14 (14 August 1971), respectively. *Red Mole* is the organ of the (trotskyist) International Marxist Group, associated (as distinct from the SLL) with the French *Ligue Communiste*, the Belgian *Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs*, and other sections of the Fourth International.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* plus editorial (unsigned), August 14 1971, 'Labour and the Common Market'.

These two minds were reconciled, verbally, by appeal to a principle: socialist internationalism. 'Workers in their millions are now discussing the many involved questions', wrote the editorialist, 'Revolutionaries can insert into these discussions the two arguments: for working-class unity against capitalist unity; and for the strategy of a red Europe against the capitalist EEC'. Since working-class unity of a sort was actually obtained over the issue, more weight attached to the second of these causes. 'The extension of the struggle against the anti-working-class policies of the Tory government onto an international level is the foundation of a socialist answer' to these involved questions, said Joseph. Or again: 'Every obstacle the workers can place in the way of the ruling class—by defeating the trade union legislation, the attempt to cut back wages, and the cuts in living standards; by throwing this Tory government out of office; by building international working-class co-operation based on a perspective of joint struggle against European capital; by giving life to a truly revolutionary socialist international—is not only a major step towards overthrowing capitalism in Britain, but also a step towards realising that victory in the Socialist United States of Europe . . .'

Yet the employment of such a principle here has a strange, even a suspicious, ring to it. In the first place, it is singularly abstract. 'We need to create living links between workers' struggles in the countries of Western Europe. We need to link up the political struggle of the vanguard for socialist policies on an all-European scale . . . This means building the international revolutionary vanguard', stated the editorial already quoted. Perhaps; but then, this was true in 1970 as well, or in 1870 for that matter. For political groups like the NMG or the SLL it obviously belongs to the category of timeless truths. This is well known; so is the fact that very little concrete reality corresponds to the abstraction—that real contacts and living links, meaningful exchanges, are few and far between.

So what was the point in repeating the principle so loudly, with such exaggerated emphasis, in this context? If it has no particular relevance or application here, then the rise in decibels looks dangerously like an empty rhetoric of diversion. The reader is, as it were, rescued from the paralysing contradiction implied in the preceding arguments—but only by the safest of marxist truisms. He is uplifted from the hopeless stalemate and confusion which threatened—but only by a somewhat trite *image d'Épinal* of red-fingered dawn. The political 'position' is of course—in the Leninist tradition—absolutely 'clear and inflexible'; unfortunately, it happens also to be nearly meaningless, and is being used to guide attention away from a basic stance which is anything but clear and coherent. Whether as distraction, as inspiration, or as consolation, the 'Socialist United States of Europe' tells one nothing about what to do with the grubby, vulgar, hopelessly bourgeois confection which not only has the sauce to exist but actually stands there on the doorstep, now, waiting to take us over.

Suspicion that something is deeply wrong in this use of 'socialist internationalism' is confirmed by another odd feature of *Red Mole's* stance. One can scarcely help noticing an absentee from Joseph's list of

'obstacles'. At that time—as Labour Party and other nationalists recognized clearly enough—the most serious obstacle to Conservative plans would have been the failure of the Common Market negotiations. The situation would have been bad enough if Labour (failing to defeat parliamentary ratification of the accord) had committed itself to subsequent withdrawal from the EEC. A demand for something like this seemed implied by many remarks in these articles—the denunciation of Wilson's leadership for failing to put up a real fight, for merely 'immobilising the labour movement' on the issue, and so on. Yet it is oddly absent from this concluding list of exhortations. Could this be because the writer was unable quite to follow the logic of his position through?

Farther on in the same number of *Red Mole* there was an article by Ernest Mandel with the title 'Britain Enters the Common Market'. Mandel is of course one of the foremost representatives of the Fourth International to which the British NMG adheres. He concluded his article by observing that for socialists the most important factor in assessing the situation must be 'the dynamic of the class struggle'. Even if it enters the Common Market, an organized and militant working-class movement like the British one will be well able to compensate for any immediate, short-term material losses (due to food-prices rises, etc). 'Joining the Common Market', he goes on, 'far from reducing "economic" class struggles, would exacerbate them. The naïve confidence of this same working class in the efficacy of parliamentary reforms and the electoral process would receive a second healthy shock, on the heels of the shock inflicted on it by its experience with the Wilson governments. In this way, its political radicalization would be reinforced . . . a growing understanding of the necessity to struggle for workers' control and workers' councils would thus gradually emerge. The social crisis would thus little by little evolve towards a revolutionary outcome. The efforts of big capital to make the British bourgeoisie participate in the construction of "its" capitalist Europe would in that case end with the intensified participation of the British working class in the struggle for "our" Europe—the red Europe of the workers, a socialist Europe'.⁹⁶ Again, a red dawn lies at the end of the argument. But there is more relationship between premises and conclusion here, and a higher degree of cogency. And—most surprising of all—what it suggests is almost the opposite of the considerations quoted above.

Entering Europe had been described as opposed to both the immediate and the long-term class interests of the labour movement; Mandel states that the immediate factors are unimportant, and that the long-term clash of interests is (at least) very doubtful. A comparison between Great Britain now and France as it was on the eve of its entry underlines his point. French workers did indeed suffer a major defeat in the first year or so of the Common Market. But they were exposed, at the same time, to the major political convulsion of the Algerian war,

⁹⁶ *Red Mole*, Vol 2, No. 14, August 1971, p. 5. Mandel is the author of *Europe versus America? Contradictions of Imperialism* (1970), the most important marxist study of Common Market economics so far published.

the sordid collapse of the IVth Republic, and the reborn nationalist glories of Gaullism. Nothing like these conditions obtains in Britain now. As the events of later 1971 and early 1972 have shown, the British working class is not (in spite of the considerable political setback represented by the anti-Market campaign) basically demoralized or disoriented. On the other hand, it is still mainly Labourist. It is in this connection that Mandel's 'long term' prognostication appears most striking. He thinks that the class struggle will be more acute inside Europe, and that in the novel context the labour movement's ancient faith in Westminster might evaporate at last—leading to greater class self-reliance, and 'political radicalization'. It is difficult indeed to see why this should be in any way 'opposed to the long-term interests' of workers, if the general political perspective of the *mcg* (and similar groups) is taken seriously. On the contrary: it has something of the air of a recipe for the most cherished aim of revolutionary politics in Britain. Is he not suggesting that under Common Market conditions the struggle against the national magic of Parliamentaryism and Labourism will be easier, and the general political aim that much more attainable?

If so, it must be quite definitely in the long-term interest of marxists to enter the *mcg*. And if that is true it was a blunder to take part in the anti-Market crusade, or lend the slightest sanction to it as a valid form of the political class struggle. What was required was not support qualified by stern warnings about chauvinist 'excesses', but opposition. The prime necessity of opposition in this sense was of course a distinction between the realities of the class struggle going on in Britain, and the totally false consciousness and political formulae being imposed upon it by the Labour-led defence of the 'national sovereignty' totem-pole. The marxist left found itself tagging along, somewhat shame-facedly, in this last mad dance around the totem—holding out one hand to the sweaty grip of Labour-CPGB chauvinism, as it were, while it wagged the forefinger of the other in the air and cried 'Down with all this narrow nationalism!' But, if its real longer-term interest is in seeing that totem-pole in the dust for good, then why should it have been there at all?⁹⁷

These may seem hard conclusions. But consider them from another angle. The question posed by *Red Mole's* dilemma was that of the apparent lack of real relationship between it and the principle of socialist internationalism—consequently, the principle itself emerged as sacred, and abstract, as an escape-route into piety. Yet even this path into the skies cannot be trodden safely; the spiritual footsteps were tripped up a few pages farther on by Mandel's suggestion that there may, after all, be a perfectly *concrete* relationship between 'socialist

⁹⁷ There may be some who perceive in this argument a shameless addiction to the logical principle of identity and non-contradiction. Nodding acquaintance with the neo-christian metaphysics of Hegel's *Logic* (or that quaint derivation from it 'dialectical materialism') may have led them to believe that *mcg* logic is whatever permits one to contradict oneself with a clear conscience. There is little space here to discuss the theory of logic. I can only record the conviction that this is as much true dialectic as the 'True Socialism' Marx discussed in *The German Ideology* was true socialism.

internationalism' and the problem. The relationship, namely, of being straightforwardly favourable to entering Europe, and straightforwardly opposed to the whole wretched Labour-Communist crusade in defence of the flag. The dilemma was in that case not simply insoluble. It did not just arouse sensations of paralytic *angst* and double-bind (feelings the very reverse of what leninist strategy should inspire, surely?): it was rendered 'insoluble' in the very act of being created, by the preposterous first step of 'supporting' (even partially, even half-heartedly, even in two minds) a mass campaign of quicksand and xenophobia. Naturally, if one sticks a foot in it then socialist honour must make one pull the other way at once and whistle the *Internationale* with all the breath one has left. But then—why was one's foot (or even a finger) there in the first place?

Misplaced Voluntarism

Because that was the direction in which the 'real movement' moved, then and there? And an elementary duty of marxists is to remain in touch with it, the better to influence it? This is an honourable motive which it would be mistaken to describe it as mere 'opportunism' (of the sort that figured so noticeably in many Labour Party conversions and silences during 1971). Nevertheless, it was misapplied in this context. There is an even more elemental duty, which was certainly the crux of the matter. That is, the duty of producing—or doing one's best to produce—a reasonably correct analysis of what the total historical situation really was, and of what (therefore) the political 'problem' actually consisted in. An important activist's delusion has always been that this moment is the easy one, and that the 'difficult' political moment is the stage which follows—stern action, militancy, applying one's shoulder to the wheel of history, etc. Yet one need only glance at the two great questions preoccupying the left in 1971 to appreciate the perils of this view. Both in the case of the Common Market and in the case of Ireland, it was in fact *extremely difficult* to understand and evaluate what was happening—not superficially that is, but with the depth and historical perspective which marxism demands—let alone decide whom to 'support', or which direction to push in. If, however, one skipped lightly across this difficulty (with a helping hand from theology, or blind instinct, or both) then it was all too easy in both situations to find a cause to support and a direction to push in. It was—one might say—*fatally easy*.

Such misplaced voluntarism is of course related to the fear of isolation in a merely 'intellectual' world. Over-identity with party and, through the party, with the ultimate collective reality of class is the traditional antidote to such anxiety. But—without going into general questions of political psychology here—it ought to be clear that there is no *real* escape from isolation in this way. Isolation is not, in fact, the worst fate which revolutionary marxists have to be afraid of. Their history is strewn with fates far worse than that. Writing in the darkness of 1915, Rosa Luxemburg mused on the 'political ineffectuality' associated with opposition to the war, and recalled other bitter episodes from the socialist past. She quoted at length from Wilhelm Liebknecht: "It is never easy to swim against the current", said the older Liebknecht,

"And when the stream rushes on with the rapidity and the power of a Niagara it does not become easier. Our older comrades still remember the hatred of that year of greatest national shame, under the socialist exception laws of 1878 . . . the socialist had been in the eyes of the masses a traitor and an enemy. Such outbreaks of the "popular soul" are astounding, stunning, crushing in their elemental fury. One feels powerless, as before a higher power . . . It is like an epidemic, in the people, in the air, everywhere. The outbreak of 1878 cannot, however, be compared with the outbreak in 1870. This hurricane of human passions, breaking, bending, destroying all that stands in its way . . . By the side of this elemental force of liberated spirits stood the most complete mechanism of the art of murder the world had hitherto seen; and all in the wildest activity . . . At such a time, what is the will and the strength of the individual? Especially when one feels that one represents a tiny minority, that one possesses no firm support in the people itself? . . . So it was no small thing at that time to swim against the current. But what is to be done, must be done. And so we gritted our teeth in the face of the inevitable . . ." Luxemburg had just then undergone the still more terrifying ordeal of 1914. On Liebknecht's recollections she comments that afterwards, 'for forty years social democracy lived upon the moral strength with which it had opposed a world of enemies'. At the outbreak of war it had been their desperate, almost suicidal task to show that 'that which had been everything in their lives, the international', was more than merely 'the figment of a dream'. 'The voice of our party', she continued, 'would have acted as a wet blanket upon the chauvinist intoxication of the masses. It would have preserved the intelligent proletariat from delirium. . . .'⁹⁸

The point is not (of course) that the happenings of 1971 are comparable in historical importance or in tragedy to those mentioned by Luxemburg. They were no more than a faint shadow of such famous 'outbreaks of the popular soul' during the epoch of European nationalism. Nevertheless, they *were* a shadow—a shadow of that same reality, and they shared (even at many removes) something of its shame and its hysteria. It was quite wrong to think that, because most of the working class and its organizations had become involved in the anti-Market movement, there was any marxist duty to join in (or at least half-sanction it with equivocations). That depended upon whether the movement was right, or wrong. Upon whether, from the point of view of 'the dynamic of the class struggle', it furthered or impeded, clarified or confused that struggle. It is not—not in the very least—an argument for passivity or abstract intellectualism to say that marxists should quietly ask questions like these, and answer them with more than rhetoric and a few battered quotes from Lenin, before 'supporting' movements or indeed striking any attitude about them.

The 'isolation' which characterizes the revolutionary marxist left in Europe is not an accident caused by this or that act of 'betrayal',

⁹⁸ "The Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis in German Social Democracy", *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (1970) pp. 317-8; See also J. P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*, vol. 2, Ch. XIV, pp. 601-9.

not even by a whole century of betrayals. And it cannot be undone by fulmination or by 'inserting' a little finger here and a little thought there—least of all into a movement which represented a mere reactionary and backward eddy away from the socio-historical mainstream. That isolation is a function of the existence of great national parties, parties like Labour or the French and Italian Communist Parties. These grew up as products of the long, painful adaptation of the working class to the conditions of the modern nation-state in Europe. Now, as the climate and environment gradually alter, they remain standing like dinosaurs—partly resisting change with their bureaucratic armour and slow brains, partly trying feebly to adapt. The 'Anti-Market' campaign was one episode in this process. For the reasons we saw, Labourism badly needed it in order to recover a little terrain. In that sense—therefore—each muted gesture of enthusiasm or encouragement for the campaign was in reality a gesture of assistance to Labour and to what the old brontosaurus *essentially* stands for (even if accompanied by gibes at Wilson and the leadership). It was a way of perpetuating the basic political condition of the very tragic 'isolation' which marxists desire, more than anything else, to escape from. As a political tactic it was not merely humiliating but profoundly self-contradictory as well.

Within the variegated chorus of the National Left, the marxists groups which inserted themselves did not play a rôle of vanguard. They were, as a matter of record, saved from being camp-followers by a certain degree of intelligent half-heartedness. Healthy political neurosis saved them from sliding all the way down the Gaderene slope, along with so many of the left intelligentsia. A sound marxist instinct preserved them from incorporation into this 'real movement' backwards. But only just: honour was saved, mainly, by looking two ways at once and saying two different things at once.

Buridan's Ass

Why was the position of Buridan's ass—transfixed to immobility in between its two equally tempting bales of straw—the best that marxism could do on such an important historical issue as this? No less than in the case of Labourism, to dismiss a dilemma like this as a 'betrayal' or a 'sell-out' (whether of marxism or of the nation) would be only intellectual abdication. What matters is not condemnation, but the certainty that this attitude too must have arisen from deep-laid necessities. The nature of these may become clearer if we turn to look at the reactions of another marxist group to 1971.

The International Socialism group—another descendant of trotskyism—had a considerable history of debate about the Common Market behind it when the anti-Market crusade arrived. The question had been aired intermittently for ten years in the pages of its theoretical journal.

The first editorial to tackle it was in late 1961, at the time of the initial British application to join EEC. It was quite markedly favourable to the move. After a scathing criticism of *Tribune's* left-wing nationalism, it declared that European integration was both 'inevitable' (in the same sense in which monopoly concentration is inevitable, and indeed

'normal') and likely to assist the positive development of the class struggle: 'If in the long run Europeanization hastens this process, as it surely will, cartel Europe will have laid, as surely, the basis for the United States of Socialist Europe. For revolutionary socialists in Britain there is no greater aim. We should be the first to clasp hands across *La Manche*...'

The writer conceded that the first impact of entry might be brutal. But to oppose it simply because it might make things 'more difficult' is 'tantamount to protesting that a cosh has studs'. He ended: 'For us the move to Europe extends the scope of the class struggle in which we are directly involved; it worsens its conditions for the present. But it makes ultimate victory more secure'.⁹⁹

This is (presumably) the stance which instinctively seemed right to begin with, and in accord with the group's honourable name. If so, instinct was soon corrected. A number of leading IS supporters must have dissented strongly, for in succeeding issues of the journal protests appeared. Lenin was loudly invoked. The majority line conveyed by editorials moved distinctly away from the original 'pro' position to one of non-committal. In No. 11 (Winter 1962) a letter to readers by Peter Sedgewick recounted something of the internecine disputes which had been going on. He found an easy target in the economic 'inevitabilism' of the earlier line: monopolies may be inevitable, but since when has it been asked of socialists to 'support' them? As for the safer if less dignified stance of non-committal to which the majority had retreated, he remarked: 'It seems to me that it is not the issue "For or Against EEC" that is an irrelevancy to the working class, but rather the pretence that it is not an issue. And an analysis of the EEC which still treats it as a straight economic question rather than a most mixed politico-strategico-economic move, is out of this world... IS had chosen to 'sit on the fence' about the Common Market, he pointed out. Its duty was to assume a clear position and oppose entry.¹⁰⁰

Five years later, it was still seated on the fence (or, astride Buridan's ass). With the second entry attempt in 1967, the whole dilemma represented itself. In the meantime events had of course strengthened one aspect of the anti-nationalist view important to the party's image, as John Palmer pointed out in a defence of the majority line: 'There can be no positive class or socialist response based upon the defence of "our" State, "our" right to plan "our" sovereignty—they are not "ours", and the mere experience of how little the Labour movement runs this country when a Labour Government sits in Whitehall is surely vivid enough a lesson in that respect...'. But this thought did not produce a return to the first position. It simply reinforced the group's now permanently split personality on the topic. Palmer concluded with a standard appeal for the United States of Socialist Europe, as Sedgewick did not fail to underline with irony in a second 'Note of Dissent': 'The fact is that "The United States of Socialist

⁹⁹ *International Socialism*, No. 6 (Autumn 1961) pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁰ See also editorial of No. 8 (Spring 1962); John Fairhead, 'Polemics: the Common Market', No. 7 (Winter 1961); editorial, No. 11; John Palmer, No. 12 (Spring 1963).

Europe" sticks out like a sore thumb among our other demands. It is a bureaucratic-utopian piety, a typical instance of the pie-in-the-sky "blackboard socialism" that this journal has exposed so effectively at other times. Opposition to the Common Market . . . remains the only possible stance for Socialists'.¹⁰¹ In spite of the majority's dithering over imponderables, '*We know* that Britain's accession to Cartel Europe will tend to strengthen the ruling class'. There was no risk in being allied to the nationalists of the left, he argued—had not marxists been allied with them on other issues like nuclear disarmament and opposition to incomes policy?

When 1971 arrived, IS's stance did move some distance in the direction Sedgewick had argued for. *International Socialism* published a much more extensive study of the Common Market by Chris Harman, which came to the flat conclusion that 'a number of interrelated reasons make it imperative for us to oppose entry'. These reasons were that entry would hit the workers; that it would strengthen a capitalist system no longer in any way progressive, in a world where 'the preconditions for socialism exist' already; that a European military force is to be feared; and that 'feeding the flames of opposition to the Market' would help defeat a hated Conservative régime. Of course all this was still linked to uncompromising demands for the Socialist United States of Europe. The vicious 'ideological illusions' of chauvinism and national sovereignty were still to be steadfastly opposed. 'But'—the article concluded—"if we are unable to get a majority for our clear and consistent positions, we have to vote against the government Common Market strategy in the only way possible—by voting with the CP and the Labour left while making our reservations known". It looked as if IS had indeed descended from its fence—or at any rate decided which bale of straw it *would* make for, *if* it was unable to swing over the majority of the British left to its own schizophrenia of long standing. This was the position reflected in the movement's weekly *Socialist Worker* during the summer of 1971.¹⁰²

Previously, positions of pro-entry or stately 'non-committal' had been countered by demands for frank opposition. Now that the group had committed itself, a protest came from the other direction. The same number of *International Socialism* carried an interesting 'Rejoinder' by Ian Birchall (who had previously published the paper's most serious analysis of Common Market affairs: 'The Common Market and the Working Class', in No. 27, Winter 1966-7). As regards the 'general feeling' behind the anti-Market campaign, of which Harman had made a good deal, Birchall commented aptly: 'It is equally true that, for

¹⁰¹ *International Socialism* No. 28 (Spring 1967) pp. 2-3.

¹⁰² *International Socialism* No. 49 (Autumn 1971); *Socialist Worker*, 10 and 24 July, 1971. The *Socialist Worker's* campaign provoked a worried letter from Germany (10 July), pointing out that 'To call for the support of anti-Common Market resolutions is to encourage nationalism and the illusions spread by the Labour left', and that this nationalistic form was 'canalizing mass discontent into safe channels . . . to make fine speeches about internationalism and then vote with the anti-marketicians is to fall into their trap'. Failure to get into Europe would not in reality be a working-class victory, the correspondent went on, but a victory for Powellism and popular 'social chauvinism'.

example, hostility to foreign workers in Britain derives from a form of class consciousness—concern to defend employment and conditions . . . We have to *relate* to these forms of distorted class consciousness; we certainly do not *adapt* to them'. For example, if a socialist saw a workers' demonstration protesting against coloured immigrants, it would certainly be a catastrophic error to 'join in,' and then at the same time wag one's forefinger sternly about the perils of racism. How could one 'relate' except by *opposing*? It goes without saying that a socialist's opposition should be different in nature from that of—e.g.—a liberal's. But it can only differ by being *more* total, and *more* intransigent, because founded upon a better understanding of the causes of the phenomenon, and inspired by a larger vision of how to cope with it. Nothing else is good enough.

is should not have abandoned its previous stance of non-committal, Birchall argued (he reproduced excerpts from old editorials at the head of his article, as an ironic reminder). The result could only be confusion and futility: "There is a danger that within the revolutionary left, the fake "great debate" of bourgeois politics will be mirrored by our own "little debate"—opposition versus abstention. This would be a pity, and a waste of opportunity to fight for what is significant and unique in our own policies. . . ' Given the 'present state of forces', and the real isolation of marxism, the only concrete result of joining in would be a paraplegic 'united front' with Labourism and the CPGB, devoted to fostering nationalist fantasies. What then is 'significant and unique' about 'our own policies'? Here—inevitably—the writer was forced back upon the rhetoric of socialist internationalism and the usual programme of developing contacts and cultivating more international awareness. Equally inevitably, the policy culminates in the United Socialist States of Europe, and the whole argument acquired precisely that intonation which Sedgewick had earlier caricatured as 'blackboard socialism'. 'Such a programme may not get much of a hearing during the slogan-shouting of the "great debate"', Birchall concluded modestly, 'but it will still be meaningful when the rest of the opposition has rolled up its union jacks and admitted defeat'.¹⁰³

Thus was the marxist 'little debate' concluded in 1971. Before going on to consider its general import in the context of the 'great debate', however, there is one aspect which detaches itself so prominently from the foregoing that it demands immediate comment. In the wrestling-match with fate conducted by both *Red Mole* and *International Socialism*, much of the contest revolves around a void. This was, of course, any *concrete* sense of what 'internationalism' means or can be made to mean, politically and ideologically. Internationalism was at once crucial to the dilemma—since it determined their marxist aversion to the nationalism of Labour and the CP—and yet quite remote and abstract. What was *felt* as essential, as the very soul of socialist honour and uprightness, is nevertheless (and somehow inevitably) translated at once into 'bureaucratic-utopian piety' until it sounds like a sermon from a progressive Anglican bishop. In other words, the void

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 18–20.

results in an evident contradiction; and argument on the subject revolves endlessly and sterilely about this inescapable contradiction.

What explanation was offered of this determining contradiction? As good as none. In the *Red Mole* article quoted from above, Ben Joseph wrote: 'It is not the objective conditions that have been responsible for a lack of socialist internationalism in Europe but a failure on the part of the bureaucratically led labour movement to live up to its responsibilities'.¹⁰⁴ Thus, we are back with treacherous leaders again. The source of the trouble is not 'objective' but 'subjective': it lies in the corrupt will and inept ideas of *les responsables*. They betray the whole European labour movement just as they have always betrayed the Labour Party. The conclusion (what else could it be?) is that it is urgently necessary to construct a new international revolutionary vanguard, one better able to deal with those 'responsibilities'. Whether it will hold high the flag of rmg and the IVth International, or that of International Socialism or one of the other competitors, is possibly of less significance here. What matters is that it will be (in perfectly idealistic fashion) grounded in the new and better *will* and ideas of someone or other.

But if abdication like this is to be avoided, then where must one look for an explanation? The conditions responsible for the lack of concrete socialist internationalism in Europe are not only 'objective', they go to the very foundations of the whole socialist experience of the last century. They are located at the heart of that experience. They concern the real experience of the masses, and not the supposed 'betrayal' of some (or even all) of their leaders. They concern the mainstream of marxism's historical development, and not a perplexing local difficulty in 'applying' its principles to the problems of 1971. The local contradiction, in fact, descends from—and is but a belated expression of—a dilemma which originated in the 19th century as marxism, a truly and concretely inter-national body of ideas, was gradually forced to adapt to the world of nations and nationalisms. For long that world of the European nation-state (and the profound extra-European transformation to which it gave birth) was apprehended as permanent. So, therefore, were the difficulties and deformations suffered by Marx's heritage in its painful and contradictory adaptation to that world. Only now perhaps, as those nation-states perish and give way to something else, does it become more possible to examine such difficulties objectively. Possible—and necessary: for of course this theoretical problem, like others before it in the history of marxism, is no merely academic one but arises out of practical reality. It arises, precisely, out of the practical dilemmas and paradoxes which marxism—as in 1971 in Great Britain—must confront and yet cannot satisfactorily master. The question, as always, has been posed by a profoundly changed and changing material reality; the answer, as far as marxists are concerned, can only come from a patient examination of that reality, and of the intellectual instruments with which it is approached.

¹⁰⁴ 'British Capitalism and Europe', vol. 2, No. 10, 1 June 1971.

I Can't Register

In the 1960s no figure was more respected by and influential upon the British intellectual left than Raymond Williams. In his characteristic answer to the *Encounter* symposium on 'Going into Europe', he said: 'I'm sorry, but if you are taking a poll on the apparently existing choices—to go "into Europe" or to stay "out of the Common Market"—I can't register. . .'. He opposed the EEC as a form of capitalist integration and 'modernization'—but equally, he opposed the phoney alternative of continued national 'independence' or 'sovereignty' as being little more than 'a familiar kind of Labour fantasy'. The real, historical choice (he continued) lay between joining Europe on Common Market terms, or an increasing subordination to United States capitalism. 'One or other of these roads will be taken' and the socialist left which Williams acknowledges will not take the choice—it will simply have to bear the consequences, day by day. For this reason, he maintained, it would be foolish for socialists to take up any position on the choice and so be 'trapped into the terms of other people's arguments'.¹⁰⁵

But the terms are *not*—on Mr Williams' own admission—those of 'other people's arguments'. The particular words and ideas chosen by the Heath government, Roy Jenkins, or the EEC's propagandists may (and indeed certainly do) travesty what is at stake. Nobody would suggest that socialists or marxists should fall into their mental world in tackling the question. The ideologies of that world, however, are reflecting a reality. And it is with the real terms of choice which this history has engendered that the left has, willy nilly, to be concerned. That is (e.g.) with the vertiginous decline in real power and independence of the European nation-state, to which British experience in the 1960s bore eloquent testimony; with the hegemony of American capitalism to which Williams refers, and the impact of its current crises; with the growing reality of capitalist integration in western Europe; and so on. This complex of problems was finally forced upon Great Britain in 1971, in the uncomfortable shape of the decision 'for or against' entering the Common Market. And while socialists could refuse to register as between Roy Jenkins' Europeanism and Michael Foot's nationalism, they could not really refuse to register about the historical turning-point behind such displays.

Raymond Williams' position of 'a plague on both your houses!' is made even more odd by the justifications he attached to it. 'I can see marginally greater opportunities for some of the developments I hope to help make happen if the Market choice is the one that is made', he added at

¹⁰⁵ In this symposium *Encounter* again invited the intellectual establishment to 'state its views' on Europe (rather in the spirit in which Sunday papers ask intellectuals to vote for their favourite books of the year at Christmas time). A yawn was written in to the very title of this new opinion-poll: 'Going into Europe—*Again?*' The yawn was continued through most of the contributions (with the marked exception of Williams') since most of the elite was clearly satisfied by the long years of turgid cliché and pious boredom which had taken the place of 'debate' on the subject. A majority of this anti-left intelligentsia was in favour of entry. See *Encounter* Dec. 1962, Jan., Feb. and March 1963; June, July and Aug. 1971.

once, 'There would be a better basis for the now urgently necessary international trade unionism, and a noticeably better basis for breaking some of the locks in English culture on which the present political hegemony depends. As British socialists we have more in common with our Italian and Scandinavian and French and German comrades than with any other active movements, mainly because of common traditions of political and working-class organization. . . ' Remarks like these create a sense of giddiness in the reader comparable to that aroused by the analysis of Ernest Mandel quoted above. If advantages of this kind—which seem, in the context of the political stalemate prevailing in Britain, to be far from 'marginal'—belong with the Common Market, then why should one be opposed, or even doubtful? Especially when the alternative of growing subordination to us imperialism possesses none of them, in Williams' view?

He does refer in passing to that other perspective mentioned several times before—the conception, dear among others to Kenneth Tynan and the editor of *Tribune*, that a Great Britain left in isolation would fall into crisis, and that such a crisis would somehow produce a national socialist revolution. But he plainly has no faith in this weird version of *la politique du pire*. 'To fall back on limited ideas of what can be done on our own in Britain is to miss the whole problem', he commented, 'The best feature of the new socialist movements of the 1960s was the combination of ideas of direct democracy, in social groupings much smaller than the old nation-state, and of an active and flexible and frontier-crossing internationalism'.

The combination of shrewdness, profundity, and mild generosity towards opponents in this judgment is typical of its author. But as so often he is too kind towards ideological enemies. Had these prophets of national-socialist apocalypse forgotten the years before 1970, when Labour was in office, when the great issue of the time was restricting coloured immigration to Great Britain, and Powell's star was so visibly in the ascendant? Had they forgotten the sour stink of an inward-turned and impotent nationalism, and its sickening decomposition towards racism? Had they quite forgotten the Labour Party's feeble response to that process, and its uneasy retreat from that (as from every other) challenge? Many hard things can be said about the Common Market debate of 1971: it was superficial, dull, conservative in both tone and inspiration, and quite unworthy of its object. However, it was not actually *debased*. It was trivial and economistic for the most part; but it did not actually *defile* everyone who touched it. And for that reason, the bitter fact is—although most commentators on the left found this easy to overlook—that it represented a considerable raising of the standard of political discussion in Great Britain. Let anyone who doubts this turn back through the records of the 1970 election campaign, or the newspaper archives of the period that led up to it. In comparison to that moment of corrupt stupefaction, the 'great debate' was to represent almost a measure of enlightenment and rationality. Through it the nation at least looked concretely outward again towards a new horizon, and away from its own soiled navel. In spite of all its hypocrisies and ambiguities, it could hardly help rising well above the era of the *grande peur* of immigration, of inert

Labourist conservatism and frantic Conservative cries for blind laissez-faire and 'law and order'.

To this odd forgetfulness of the recent past, there corresponded an odd lack of imagination concerning possible futures. In the course of 1971 the left was able—at last!—to obtain a rhetorical identification with at least part of the substance of the country's nationalism. It almost instantly forgot the profoundly and historically conservative nature of that substance—a nature attested by the entire history of British imperialism, as well as by the painful experiences of yesterday. Yet who can doubt that, if Great Britain were to be excluded from Europe and thrust back into the isolation of the 1960s, this nature would be swiftly revealed again and exploited by its true masters? If the ruling class and its creatures had no alternative but to turn back and inwards, towards the surviving traditions of a purely national destiny, they would have to make the best of it. As a precondition they would effortlessly reappropriate their own property of nation-state culture and *Gemeinschaft*. Powell would return to claim his own. And in that case the left would turn out to have been no more than the sorcerer's apprentice who had temporarily harnessed the unclean spirits, only to be overwhelmed by them. What sort of 'crisis' would this be? How would it 'pose for the British people economic questions which would almost certainly have a socialist answer'? (to quote again from the fevered nationalist imagination of *Tribune's* editor).

Raymond Williams concluded his thoughts on the great choice by saying: 'In the hard years immediately ahead . . . we shall indeed be thinking about and working in Europe, but about and in a different Europe from any the orthodox campaigns now see or propose. . .' Is this not—one can scarcely resist the thought—the United States of Socialist Europe again, albeit in more tentative and nebulous form? Another Europe, at any rate, distinct from and opposed to the bourgeois or social-democratic Europe of Brussels and the European Movement. Raymond Williams, in this context, must be seen as an outstanding contemporary (perhaps the greatest) representative of a *national* culture: he represents the most valiant and unremitting effort to formulate a valid left-wing *Weltanschauung* out of the materials of national culture, through a kind of organic development of one rich nation-state heritage. All the more striking, therefore, is the coincidence between his conclusion and that of the marxists considered above. Marxism is (or is supposed to be, as everybody knows) an international culture, drawing its force and inspiration not from one but from the comparison and synthesis of many national experiences. Yet both the theorist of national community and the international marxists end up, by a *force majeure* concealed somewhere in their position, with this 'Red Europe'—with an abstract Europe, not yet in existence, to be constructed by the left, whose main discernible characteristic is that it *is not* and has nothing in common with the vulgar shopkeeper's atrocity Great Britain is about to join.

Consider again the profile of this general left-wing stance. Its basic dilemma is that of a felt equidistance between the alternatives of simple left-wing nationalism and the Common Market—that sole and

unpalatable way of transcending nationalism which the existing historical situation seems to present. Whether expressed as the tergiversations of Buridan's ass or as Williams' 'I can't register', it is relieved in the end by the purely theoretical and idealist 'third way' of the European socialist future—by a *spiritual* transcendence, so to speak, whose prime feature and definition is polar opposition to the *material* reality creeping so dismally into existence at the hands of President Pompidou, Mr Heath, Prime Minister Werner and the rest. Whether or not (as notably in the case of International Socialism) equidistance tended to give way to compromise with nationalism in the heat and dust of the anti-Market movement, the dilemma was little changed. For if the repellent quality (the negative charge) of one of the alternatives diminished a little for tactical-political reasons, it was also compensated for by even greater emphasis upon internationalism, the vanguard-to-be's transcendence of the present, etc. This mobilizing myth of the future has (by definition) no association with the dead, reactionary realities of the EEC. Once, Harman pointed out in his *International Socialism* essay, revolutionaries did support 'progressive' ventures of the bourgeoisie: 'Marx, for instance, gave support to the movement for German unity. . . But he did so in a period in which capitalism as a system was still struggling for supremacy against older forms of class society, and in the process preparing the preconditions for socialism. Today, however, these preconditions exist. Rationalization of the system means strengthening it at a time when . . . revolutionary change alone offers mankind any future'. And Birchall, even while criticizing Harman's position, in his own way quite strongly confirmed this essential diagnosis by declaring' . . . that the Common Market is historically progressive, because it lays the basis for socialist internationalism . . . has never been the position of any of the genuine left'.

It is of course this diagnosis which renders the paralytic dilemma insoluble (save by a rhetorical *faute en avant*). One should note also, for the fact is certainly not without some significance, that this is the point which gives these marxist views—in spite of their professed contempt for the CEE and the Labour-left—a very solid measure of agreement with Gollan's Iron Heel apparition and the general left-nationalist bugaboo of a European capitalism worse than the British sort. Differing as they do so widely on the meaning to be attached to internationalism, they nonetheless coincide suspiciously on the meaning of the Common Market for internationalism: none whatever. What is the nature of this consensus extending so astonishingly from Michael Foot, via John Gollan and Raymond Williams, to the outposts of IMG and IS? Is it plain common sense, or a shared prejudice?

Most common sense *is* shared prejudice. It would be difficult to find a better example of this truth than the present one. Firstly, such wide monochrome unanimity is in itself suspicious—above all (one would have thought) from that marxist point of view which looks for the contradictory and active side of things. Free trade, the agrarian and industrial revolutions, the formation of nation-states—all these are judged, in spite of their cruel and inhuman aspects, to have been also 'progressive' by nature. They were (and are, to the extent to which they are still going on) part of the development of that *Gesellschaft*

which gave rise to the labour and revolutionary movements, and upon whose development these depend. The European Common Market is a partial return to free trade after the era of national protectionism and autarchy, a continuation of the agrarian and industrial revolutions, and a tentative successor to the increasingly anachronistic nation-states of western Europe. Why then should it be judged in some basically different fashion? Why should the new form of all these profoundly contradictory phenomena not be deemed worthy (so to speak) of a single important contradiction? For Harman (and perhaps even for Birchall) time and contradiction have come to a stop in Europe: nothing worth while is left except the revolution. Capitalism has produced all the preconditions and bases for this revolution, and for internationalism: it has nothing more to offer. From this moment of history forward, everything depends, totally, upon the will-power of a new 'revolutionary vanguard'.

The error involved here is not a question of precise political or moral judgment, of deciding just how to apply labels like 'reactionary' or 'progressive' to the EEC. It is more fundamental than that. It consists in an ideological pre-empting of the issue, a kind of *a priori* relegation of an emergent and major historical phenomenon to one monochrome category. What it does is (approximately) to perceive the Common Market not as a development of 'capitalism' or 'bourgeois society'—like, say, industrialism, or parliamentarism, or early colonialism—but as a reaction against or a 'disease' of capitalism, like high imperialism or fascism. It is not a new development or 'stage' in late bourgeois society in Europe, but a (purely reactionary) attempt by European capital to save its own skin—which can consequently, be abstractly distanced and counterposed to 'our' Europe, the socialist *internationale*, the reality where all will be (in Williams' words) 'different' from what is now seen and proposed. The Common Market's Europe is not a reaction (however slow, hesitant, and self-contradictory) against and *away from* fascism and the epoch of imperialist savagery by the bourgeoisie; it is more like a sort of etheralized fascism, minus the uniforms, the anti-semitism, the *Führer*, the party dictatorship, and other old folklore. Comparatively few anti-Marketees openly employed this analogy (like Tynan in the letter mentioned above). This may be because it is more suited to moments of rhetorical hysteria than to rational argumentation. But it did surface occasionally; it is very near the surface in Gollan's vision of the Iron Heel and the Labour-left's perturbation about an 'inward-looking', ultra-capitalist, 'undemocratic', 'narrow nationalist' Europe; while the logic of even the marxist arguments described above seems to imply a *fascist* version of the same thing.¹⁰⁶

Capitalist *Gesellschaft* has, in all essentials, run its course. Hence, no new generation of difficult or fundamental adjustment lies ahead. Since

¹⁰⁶ It is presumably the subliminal operation of this category which explains a perplexing aspect of the anti-Market crusade: the way in which it was so repeatedly held (often by the same people) that the European Community is *both* an embryo totalitarian peril *and* an almost ineradicable futility. Normally—as it were—it is a *direct menace to our freedoms*; but each time the member countries fall out over some

there is no new reality (in the relevant sense), there is no urgent need to decipher its meaning, to distinguish its 'progressive' aspect from its conservative or reactionary aspects, to see in which ways it helps 'our side' and in which ways it hinders it. Dialectical application is not required: for there is no new and contradictory social reality out there for it to work on. The old categories will do well enough. *We know* that Britain's accession to Cartel Europe will strengthen the ruling class', as Peter Sedgewick wrote. Hence, *we know* all we really need to know: that is, we know we have to combat it, as in integral bloc subsumed under one mental category (in the first place, by staying out of it!).

We know, indeed, that the Common Market is intended to strengthen the sinews and the world-position of European capitalism and its various ruling classes. What we do not know—and on the basis of this kind of analysis, cannot ever know—is whether, or in what ways, it may *also* strengthen the position and enlarge the real possibilities of the European working classes and European social revolutionaries. Yet, from the point of view of 'the dynamic of the class struggle', it is surely this question which is vital. Naturally, the makers and the propagandists of Community Europe never intended their construction to have such a consequence. But since when was the evolution of capitalist reality governed wholly by the 'intentions' of its political rulers? An odd, monolithic fatalism seems to underscore the left's attitude at this point. *We know* it all in advance, so to speak, and it can all be written off as bad, hopeless. The slaves on the old plantation hear that their masters are about to merge it with others in the neighbourhood, to form a more viable (but as yet indeterminate) consortium. They should inquire (one might think) whether the new enterprise—forced on the masters by unkind circumstance, after all—has some redeeming features from their own point of view. Might it not at least rescue them from the old rut of head-patting paternalism and familial idiocy? Not a bit of it! *They know* that under the new régime the beatings and lynchings will be worse and they will have even less chance of burning the mansion down than now. The slave-and-cotton economy has in all essentials run its course, and now—in its maturity—already offers all possible preconditions of emancipation. . .

The most vital historical questions, from the point of view of the class struggle, are not answered by the arguments considered above:

trivial issue (as they do nearly every week), it is immediately patent that the *whole thing is a farce* which is in course of disintegrating anyway—so why bother joining it? What such ludicrously incompatible ideas have in common is of course that both are forms of *exorcism*—and so can be entertained successively (or even simultaneously) by the same mind anxious above all to keep an ideological equilibrium undisturbed. It is curious and interesting, also, to see how (in spite of the doses of stalinism and old-left nationalism so prominent in the mixture) this aspect of anti-Marketism rejoins the well-known Frankfurt School ideology of modern capitalist society, as found in certain works of (e.g.) Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, which have tended to identify *all* later or contemporary developments of capitalism as potentially totalitarian (and hence to be totally *negated* by the revolution *en bloc*). On this, see G. Therborn, 'The Frankfurt School', *New Left Review* No. 63 (Sept-Oct 1970).

they are ideologically precluded. Yet the oddity—the absurdity, even—of the ideological position leaps to the eye. For example, how can it reasonably be maintained, in one and the same argument, *both* that ‘all the preconditions of socialism exist’ *and* that, in a major European country in 1971, the great mass of the working class and nearly all its important organizations and spokesmen were carried away by a frankly nationalistic crusade to defend ‘national sovereignty’? The contradiction is merely rendered more glaring by a laboured insistence on the ‘illusions’ of sovereignty, socialism-in-one-country, and so on. For if these are all illusions, then it follows that most workers are still profoundly victims of their false consciousness. And how then can it be pretended that the preconditions for an international socialism already exist? It is, surely, one precondition of such a socialism (and, incidentally, of the formation of a true ‘international vanguard’) that such illusions should have lost their grip, and that class consciousness should have become *decisively* more important than national consciousness.

Consider what is really the same point from another angle. If it is true that European capitalism has ended its ‘progressive’ career entirely, and already produced all the conditions of its own real transcendence, then it follows that the existing order of nations and national consciousness—the pre-Common Market order everyone is familiar with—is adequate, from a socialist point of view. But if that is true, then national struggles are (and can remain) the crucial factor: as Chris Harman put it, ‘national peculiarities still determine the tempo of the class struggle . . . the key demands relate to class power in particular countries’.¹⁰⁷ And if that is true, then the nationalists of the left are quite correct: Anthony Wedgwood Benn and the Communist Party of Great Britain are to be congratulated on their logic, and supported in their struggle. For it is not possible to see how, in such a world, the cause of international socialism could be better assisted than by a ‘national’ revolution—or if the nation should prove too strong to allow a revolution, by a ‘national path to socialism’! We should, clearly, put up with the preconditions which history has allowed us, and make the best of them. We should do so even if it means an undignified recourse to ‘chauvinism’. Where, in that case (as Peter Sedgewick also asked) is the harm in an alliance with flag-wavers?

The question of alliances may, indeed, be taken as a central and indicative one in this knot of ambiguous attitudes. In one sense it might be thought quite secondary; for when such a complex historical problematic as the Common Market is narrowed down to a simplistic political choice of ‘for or against’, weird bedfellows are hard to avoid. It would be as absurd to condemn a pro-Common Market socialist for being, in this sense, an ‘ally’ of the Bundesbank, ICI or the European Movement, as it would to condemn anti-Marketees for being allied to Powell, the Monday Club, or the patriot scoundrels of the Labour front bench. One cannot help who happens to be standing

¹⁰⁷ *International Socialism*, No. 49 (Autumn 1971), p. 18.

somewhere alongside of one, in this kind of line-up. But beyond the superficial question of alignments, there is a deeper, more real question—a question of ‘alliance’ in a more valid sense. This hinges upon the real balance of forces present in the issue, and upon the real (conscious or unconscious) relationship linking those aligned: what one might call, in a Hegelian phrase, the ‘inner connection of dispositions’ prevailing among them. Are they indeed related quite contingently, standing along the same line for (possibly) quite different and independent motives? Or is there a subterranean force of cohesion, a uniting principle of solidarity there as well?

If one looks at the pro- and anti-Market alignments in the light of these questions, then the shadows fall somewhat differently. For while it is hard to see any genuine cohesion between the pro-Market left and the forces of the State or big capital, it is—on the contrary—all too easy to perceive an immensely powerful principle of union on the other side. It was, as a matter of fact, so hard to impugn the motives of the pro-Marketees that Clive Jenkins had to resort to the hoariest device known to man or socialist: saying that their hands were in the till. What else could a poor nationalist do? Socialists are not to be commonly observed in Trafalgar Square, the Champs Elysées, or Piazza del Popolo waving a starry blue flag nobody would even recognize, visibly in transports of European chauvinism. If asked the last time they saw a socialist (or for that matter a capitalist) breathless with emotion over the future of Europe, most people on the left would have to think quite hard. Hence, it is necessary to say they are (directly or indirectly) in the pay of FIAT or British Leyland, or else that they are vulgar bourgeois careerists who see a personal future in Europe.

But on the other side, naturally, such improbable conspiratorial diagnoses are quite superfluous: everybody knows what the force of gravity is which is operating there, and everybody is aware of its strength. It is the entire force of a profound and many-faceted national culture and consciousness, active upon many levels of personality and ideology, and rooted in over a century of predominantly national experience and struggles. The two forces in the issue are not, in any real political sense, equal—not for the left, not on the terrain where it had to face up to the choice. One was almost laughably more powerful and effective than the other.

The real question of ‘alliance’ is surely governed by this fact. Where did the true risk of alignment lie? In a temporary parallelism of views with the Heath government, Roy Jenkins, big business, and other enemies—a coincidence which *in the long run*, if argued and explained in a rational manner, no one but a wilful lunatic could have misunderstood? In an alignment like that (e.g.) among Marx, Engels, Lassalle and Bismarck on the unity of Germany in the 19th century? Or in coincidence with the enveloping tide of regressive nationalist illusion set in motion—part consciously, part instinctively—on the left and the diehard right? In a conjunctural and short-lived symmetry with the feeble, ambiguous, relatively powerless bourgeois ideology of ‘Europeanism’—or in a return to ‘alliance’ with the womb, with the

strongest, blindest, most tenacious of all political ideologies? There was little risk in any imputed 'alliance' with the former, by what Ian Birchall would call the 'genuine left', for the simple reason that no such relationship was wanted, possible, or even conceivable. But there was every risk in an 'alliance' with the latter, since this alignment—if genuine—could not help being subordination, surrender to a vastly superior collective power which wanted, indeed confidently demanded, that every segment of the 'genuine left' join in its chorus. The situation is not at all like those others which Sedgewick refers to, the alliance over nuclear disarmament or incomes policy. These were particular issues of policy, however important. Whereas this is a question about the very form of political life and action, now and in future, a question of a far profounder—and so far more exacting—character.

If the former choice appeared impossibly difficult (and was in fact made by next to nobody) this is, as we have seen, because it seemed impossible to think that the ruling classes, capitalism itself, could be—even quite unintentionally, half-blindly—evolving in a partly 'progressive' fashion. It was unthinkable that capitalism itself should be producing certain conditions of a concrete 'internationalism'—accomplishing, that is, for its own purposes and in its own way the sacred, exclusive, long-held aim of socialism. *We know* that this cannot be so. Is it wrong to detect a note of complacency in this certainty? And in the complacency, the reflection of a prolonged era of vital stagnation and too great fixity of horizons, where problems of this anguishing kind never had to be asked? Is there not also a trace of fossilized marxism about it, of the mechanical imposition of hardened categories—even by those who have *politically* quite rejected the world of stalinism and dialectical-materialist dogma? And then, underneath the fossil categories—shielded by them as it were—a certain amount of carefully-tended *sacro egoismo* of party or group, consecrated to a mission against the world, but at the same time protecting that mission from the world?

IX Beyond the Nation

'In general, the protective system of our day is conservative, while the free trade system is destructive. It breaks up old nationalities and pushes the antagonism of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to the extreme point. In a word, the free trade system hastens the social revolution. It is in this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, that I vote in favour of free trade . . .'

Karl Marx, *On the Question of Free Trade* (1848)¹⁰⁸

In the 'Great Debate' revolutionary socialists groped for phrases that could condemn international capitalism, evoke a United States of Europe, and appeal immediately to the British working class all at the same time. Behind this evident unease lay an attitude, half assumption and half wish: that there is no new national question. How can there be when the nation concerned is so old? But it is precisely the decline of the European nation which has created the new problem.

Capitalist forces of production long ago outstripped the confines of nation-states. Imperialism and inter-imperialist conflicts have dominated the history of capitalist Europe for that reason. Now, partly to defend themselves against other imperialisms and partly to reassert the global importance they still strive for, the major capitalist countries in Europe are compelled to sink their differences. Similar but conflicting international roles and nationalistic hostilities will be exchanged, they fondly hope, for a *Europe des patries* with unified home affairs and a single policy *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, over the Common Market, as over Ulster, the left found itself faced by situations in which nationalism had become the dominant *motif*. In both, although for different reasons and with different results, archaic responses swallowed up contemporary questions. And in both, the left—above all the marxist left—found it extremely difficult to distinguish one from another and see where its future interests lay.

In part this is because the conflict at the heart of the contemporary national question is one between new content and old forms: the new socio-economic content of the contemporary class struggle squeezed out by the very evolution of capitalist society, and the chronically shrunken national institutions inherited from the past. This disparity has been there a long time. But it was particularly and dangerously acute in Britain in 1971 as the ruling class moved more decidedly on to a new course.

¹⁰⁸ Barnett Brown and Hughes, in the pamphlet referred to above (p. 78) used some words from this same speech of Marx's as preface and justification: 'To call cosmopolitan exploitation universal brotherhood is an idea that could only be engendered in the brain of the bourgeoisie'. The implication seemed to be that the Common Market is today's 'cosmopolitan exploitation', and that Marx would have opposed it. If so, it is necessary to point out that he in fact always preferred and defended the cosmopolitanism of the 'free trade system', nowhere more clearly than in this address—though naturally without subscribing to its ideological disguise of 'universal brotherhood' (which a good deal of today's puerile Europeanist propaganda repeats).

This situation contrasted sharply with the familiar issues of national politics and national liberation from colonial regimes: not least in the fact (however hard for socialists to interpret or even admit) that it created a certain *objective* coincidence of interests as between the revolutionary left and advanced elements within the ruling class. For both—and indeed far more for revolutionaries—old national forms blocked their potential development. For the Labour Party, the opposite was true.

The Great Debate brought into question the ideology and institutions of the nation. These are essential to reformism—whether in capitulation to the ‘national interest’ over wage bargains, or in collaboration over imperialist alliances—and it remains essential for the revolutionary left to delineate itself *as sharply as possible* from social chauvinism. The arguments above have attempted to show that, by its prevalently national-traditionalist orientation, the left wing of the nation-state’s political establishment defended both itself *and the establishment as a whole*. Through their defence, the old forms retained or reaffirmed their grip over the disturbing new content. It was time for things to change. This prevented them from changing too much, from drifting ‘out of hand’—it made for continuity, for the containment of rending social pressures inside the nation’s familiar political structures. The fact that Labour did this was not surprising, even though it meant its leaders standing on their heads. The Labour Party fulfilled its *raison d’être* most exactly. It channelled working-class hostility into futile ‘opposition’ to the government and at the same time isolated it from revolutionary politics. For the revolutionary left however entry into the Common Market increases the chances of effective political opposition to capitalism because it weakens the traditional hegemony of the ruling class. There is no threat that workers will regard the EEC as anything but a capitalist enterprise. Support for entry can only increase the tempo of revolutionary politics, and farther diminish the role of social democracy. Opposition to entry, on the contrary, while it may appear to oppose the ruling class down the line, in fact provides it with a rearguard action which will allow it to take the ‘nation’, battered but securely in one piece, into the Common Market with them. While there was a coincidence of antagonistic political interests between the revolutionary left and the ruling class over entry, the type of opposition to entry which has dominated the labour movement has been directly in the interests of the ruling class themselves.

‘One may declare oneself an enemy of the constitutional regime without declaring oneself a friend of the ancien regime . . .’ Marx pointed out in the text on *Free Trade* referred to above.¹⁰⁹ Socialists had of course to criticize and see beyond the world of free trade and the bourgeois-democratic constitutionalism of 1789 or 1848—just as, today, they should be able to denounce and see farther than the sort of united Ireland or united Europe which the bourgeois regime

¹⁰⁹ The address on ‘Free Trade’ (a speech made to the Brussels Democratic Association in January 1848) is usually reprinted as an appendix to *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847)—see e.g. the currently available edition of the latter by International Publishers (New York, 1971).

of Heath, Lynch and Pompidou are working towards. But it does not follow that one must remain, or become again, a friend of the declining nation-state or its moribund nationalism. Still less does it follow that one should ever *prefer* it politically where such a choice is given. On the contrary, a *revolutionary* left—a left not irredeemably entangled in the structures and illusions of the ‘ancien regime’—must always choose in the other sense. Its interests drive it towards the future, not the past. In its perennial choice between evils, the guiding slogan has in this sense to be: ‘Better the Devil one does *not* know . . .’

It knows the demons of the nation-state and nationalism only too well, after all. The modern left in Europe is indeed largely the by-product of the great social process in which, during the last century, these nation-states mobilized and educated the new masses of the industrial revolution. Yet even as it uplifted them in this way and established a general culture level, nationalism imposed a profoundly reactionary stamp upon the whole process. Even as it benefited from the transformation and gave birth to the mass organizations of modern times, the left was forced away from its original goal, the European social revolution. The reactionary aspects of Europe’s modern wave of ‘nation-building’ became more and more dominant from the era of high imperialism onwards; and the goal to which they led the historical process was not the social revolution but the ‘total war’ of 1942 to 1945, not a new age of humanity but the near-destruction of that revolution’s most priceless inheritance, in the shape of the European-Jewish culture which Coughlan believes never to have existed. It may be understandable that after this secular process the left remains instinctively attached to its nation-state mould—especially in the context of the post-1945 restoration of Europe’s old politics, and above all in Britain, which for a quarter of a century has suffered uniquely from the stranglehold of an over-organic continuity with the past. But it is scarcely defensible.

Especially as it has not even any tactical justification. For one of the more encouraging aspects and perhaps the most striking phenomena of all in the complex of events was the underlying *weakness* of the mass psychology which the nationalist reactions now have to rely upon. Residual mass nationalism is still important enough to be mobilized by Labour and manipulated in the way we saw—within, one should not forget, perhaps the most conservative nation-state context in Europe. But at no time did it seem likely that this movement would become uncontrollable—that it would develop into a genuine mass action to prevent the ‘betrayal’ at any price, governed by the sort of popular hysteria and demagogic leadership which (e.g.) Powell was only too anxious to provide. The tame or ‘phoney’ character of what took place depended precisely upon this unlikelihood. Even more striking, the impact of the Irish crisis upon popular attitudes was visibly far less than it would have been a generation ago. Outside the living anachronism of Ulster, there was extraordinarily little of that reaction of outraged chauvinism and wild vengeance-seeking which the past history of Anglo-Irish relations had made so familiar. In both Great Britain and the Irish Republic the masses remained concerned but (by old nationalist standards) *relatively* passive and indifferent.

In other words, the nationalism of the Labour Party and the anti Market campaign although still powerful is a declining asset. The tide has fallen a long way. As the history of Powellism has shown, in conditions of isolation and paralysis, where 'national narrowness' and archaic political forms have persisted too long, it may be forced to rise again. Its pathological possibilities are by no means exhausted, given the right circumstances. But without these circumstances (in Britain's case, e.g.; a grim battle for national and economic survival outside the Common Market) it is now relatively weak and—presumably—will continue to waste away.

By contrast the Common Market—Europe's newest 'constitutional regime'—represents a new phase in the development of bourgeois society in Europe. To vote in favour of that regime 'in a revolutionary sense alone' does not imply surrender to or alliance with the left's enemies. It means exactly the opposite. It signifies recognizing and meeting them as enemies, for what they are, upon the terrain of reality and the future. It implies a stronger and more direct opposition to them, because an opposition unfettered by the archaic delusions of Europe's *ancien régime*. In 1971 the British left did choose to oppose by retreating determinedly within these delusions—indeed, by making of them a fortress against a Europe imagined as sheer capitalism fostered by sheer bureaucracy. But what did it gain by this tactic? Did it in the smallest degree help the growth of a clearer class consciousness, or give a more articulate general expression to the working class *malaise* of the moment? Did it move one millimetre towards the renovation and reorganization of the socialist left which is so long overdue in the country? Or did it simply provide a little deodorant to cover the smell of decaying Labourist and nationalist tradition?

Within the left—it should also be said—marxism's stake in this development is a special one. For even in degradation, even in its fossilised state, it represents and preserves the true nerve of a European culture. If the culture and the politics of Brussels are so nerveless, this is largely because the left, and above all the marxist left, have been absent from their history. We saw earlier both how marxist internationalism is preserved like a holy relic and invoked at moments of idealism, and how little corresponds to this abstraction on the level of the concrete. But how can this void be filled, how can a concrete internationalism be re-formed, except in a European context? Europe is not the world, say certain imperialists-in-reverse for whom nothing less than the whole globe is enough. Perhaps not, but it never was and does not have to be, in order to be preferable to the politics of the individual nation-state and the culture of nationalism. Marxism' Jewish grandeur was created almost entirely *against* the rising tide of that culture, by exiles, émigrés and cosmopolitan refugees, and the phoney *Volksgemeinschaften* of the imperialist nation-states has always been anathema to it. 'National' marxism has always been a joke in doubtful taste. It is difficult to imagine it rediscovering much of the grandeur, that dimension of concrete internationalism, except in contexts like that furnished by the Common Market for Western Europe.

Who Gained ?

Finally, one need only ask who gained from the 'Great Debate' and who lost as a result of it.

The Conservative party and government gained much from it, clearly. The Common Market success signified a recovery of nerve and a badly-needed sense of achievement: it enabled them to rally their political basis in the middle classes very effectively—while of course the 'new horizon' also usefully distracted popular attention from problems it was unable to solve (Ireland, inflation, the economic class struggle, etc). But the Labour Party too benefited from its impact. Through its phoney 'opposition' it—and those other sectors of the traditional left-wing establishment who joined in—rediscovered a little *raison d'être*, an appearance of purpose and animation. By defending the nation, they defended themselves—staving off, if only for a time, their own bankruptcy and decline.

On the other hand, it was the real social struggle of the period which was the loser. From the later days of the Labour government up to the present, the class struggle of British society has displayed an almost uninterrupted vitality. There is little room here to analyze this process. And it would certainly not be part of any such analysis to deny the many deeply conservative and contradictory aspects of such struggles—their frequent parochialism, their defences of privilege, their chaos and absence of perspective. Nevertheless, the dominant impression they produce is surely a different one. It is one of increasing confidence and self-activity, and of a sharper intolerance of traditional injustices. Whether in the Pilkington strike of 1970, the Clyde shipyard work-in, the engineering workers' occupations, the miners' strikes of 1971-2, or the more recent dockers' disputes, this spirit was in evidence. It was frequently expressed in a pressure for new forms and tactics of struggle, and directed (at least in the first instance) against traditional structures of leadership.

Yet such pressures have not found the new political forms which they need. The prolonged ferment has been contained inside the conventional structures. The latter now possess (as we saw in the case of the Labour Party) relatively few inner resources: they have been enfeebled by a long process of erosion. But they are still perfectly capable of exploiting the conjunctural opportunities which present themselves, in order to 'counter-attack' and re-establish what they can of their authority. Economically, the new Industrial Relations Act has furnished an occasion of this kind. Politically, it was the Common Market controversy which did so. And of the two the second was more valuable—and so seized upon with greater avidity—because it was the safest, the most intrinsically conservative issue available. The industrial legislation conflict (in spite of its potential as a mobilizer of traditional Labourist opinion for the next elections) remains dangerous, even explosive; whereas the debate about Europe both revolved upon familiar (not to say boring) terrain and offered access to the safest political bet of all, injured nationalist sentiment.

There was, in other words, a profound difference between the *real* conflict at work and the *apparent* conflict that figured in parliament and the press. The real conflict moved, blindly and in utter confusion, towards a disruption of the status quo; the apparent conflict around scarecrows like national sovereignty and the White Cliffs was moving, in spite of its pretensions, to repair and sustain the same status quo in the name of the 'nation'. The real material conflict had pushed Britain's national capitalism towards bankruptcy in the previous years; it continually challenged and undermined the leadership of the trade union movement; its disenchantment with Labour had prepared the way for the electoral defeat of 1970. The apparent, spiritual conflict over the Englishman's Parliament and our community folkways took some of the heat off capitalism; it gave the union leaders a common flag to brandish; and it prepared the way for Labour's return to power in future elections. The invalid was made a new man by his quick communion in the whorehouse of national traditions. And no one need have the slightest doubt (nor should have done even at the Great Debate's wilting climax) that, when the moment is right, the Labour Party, the TUC, and the Communist Party *will* trail along into the European Community in the footsteps of the ruling class and the Jenkinsites. What else can they do? They will proceed, however, in better conservative order and with better traditional morale as a result of their spurious exercises over the body and soul of 'national sovereignty'.

March—July 1972

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new left review

Michele Salvati

Impasse for Italian Capitalism

Hedda Korsch

Memories of Karl Korsch

Ian Gough

Marx and Productive Labour

Victor Kiernan

Victorian London

Andrew Glyn/
Bob Sutcliffe

Wilson's Economic Record

\$1.50

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Arthur Boyars
Derek Birdall
B. de Boer, 188 High Street, Nutley, New Jersey
07110, USA
New Left Review, 7 Cardale Street,
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Telephone 01-734 8839
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See inside back cover

In statistical surveys today, the new map of the Common Market contains something like two separate sectors: a central bloc of territory comprising France, Benelux and Germany, marked by unbroken growth and high per-capita income, with the laggard and relatively low-income zones of Britain and Italy on either flank. The now threatened Dunlop-Pirelli merger has recently highlighted the common economic troubles of English and Italian capitalism. Politically, the Heath and Andreotti governments represent the two most extreme right-wing regimes in the EEC, reflecting the gravity of the problems facing the bourgeoisie of each country. We start this number of the Review with a study by Michele Salvati of the dramatic trajectory of Italian capitalism since the war. Italy is currently the weakest link of European capital: amidst stagnant production, accelerating inflation and a wave of bankruptcies, its domestic crisis is nearing 'the point of no return', in the opinion of Agnelli, the head of Fiat. Salvati shows the class mechanisms of the Italian 'miracle' of the 50's, and the reversal of the late 60's which has taken the country from precocious maturity to premature contraction. The price of the political supremacy of Christian Democracy has been the social preservation of archaic small industries, parasitic bureaucratic agencies and deep regional divisions—all of which have prevented the expanded reproduction of big capital to confront international competition. The Northern business class, having failed to solve the problems of uneven development in the South, is now itself imperilled by the uneven development of Italy within West European capitalism.

The theoretical distinction between productive and unproductive labour is one of the most central, yet neglected aspects of Marx's mature work. In an important essay, Ian Gough explores the significance Marx attributed to these two categories. He makes it clear that their purpose was neither moralistically to denounce 'unproductive labour' as such, nor certainly to exclude the 'unproductive' worker from the political ranks of the proletariat, but rather to investigate the internal articulation of the capitalist mode of production as an economic system. For Marx, productive labour was defined by the fact that it produced surplus value for the capital against which it exchanged. Shifts in the relative proportion of the two types of labour bring into question the rationality of capitalism as a whole rather than isolated or particular branches of economic activity. Gough carefully analyses and compares later interpretations of these twin categories by Marxists, and their implications for the struggle for socialism. His study will provide a bench-mark for future discussion of the problem.

The relationship between town and country has been the object of many historical and ideological debates on the Left. The relationship between types of city and forms of class combativity, determined by the variant nature of the exploited masses generated by different patterns of urbanization, has been much less considered. Yet its importance for the political course of working-class development has always been a decisive one. In this issue of NLR, Victor Kiernan reviews Gareth Stedman Jones's recent study of Victorian London—the capital of the premier imperialist power of the 19th century, with its vast underclass of casual labour, absence of a factory proletariat, and dominance by a largely residential and non-industrial bourgeoisie. Setting the specific nature of the English metropolis in an international and comparative framework, Kiernan demonstrates the key interest of this topic for Socialists everywhere.

The Wilson government of 1964–70 was the first social-democratic administration in Britain to be initially welcomed by a majority of the capitalist press. It left office amid such universal contempt that even some of its own Cabinet Ministers have since tried to disown its record. The reformist economist Beckerman has recently tried to wipe the slate clean by dismissing the whole experience as the unfortunate result of 'technical' errors of Treasury policy. Andrew Glyn and Bob Sutcliffe, whose pioneering article on the collapse of British profits in NLR 66 has since been extended into a highly successful Penguin, demolish Beckerman's thesis and the subsequent 'adjustments' of Fabian and Labourist ideology since the last election.

Michele Salvati

The Impasse of Italian Capitalism

In the years immediately following the Italian surrender, from 1943 to 1948, us and British imperialism exerted their greatest efforts to restabilize bourgeois society in Italy and to crush the revolutionary movement that had arisen in the anti-fascist struggle. The Italian ruling class emerged intact if battered from the Allied victory and faced few of the serious problems encountered by their fellow bourgeoisies in Germany and Japan, who underwent a bloodier subjection. The Italian capitalists were given every support in the military, economic and political fields to enable them to reinforce their hegemony, and the post-fascist Italian regime was quickly integrated into the imperialist system as a vital if junior component. Once restabilized, Italy underwent an economic boom that took both left and right by surprise and which gave it one of the highest growth rates in Europe. But from 1963 onwards this rate of development slowed down and Italy entered a period of greater difficulty, marked by the weakness of the 'Centre Left' political coalition and by recurring economic contradictions. A vital factor in Italy's post-war boom was certainly the international capitalist

expansion led by the United States; and the present contradictions, marked by a fall in profits and monetary crises, will certainly affect Italy by weakening stimuli and sharpening international competition. But the 1963 downturn in Italy *preceded* the international downturn. The key to the present crisis must be found in the *internal* character of Italy's development since the war. Some other North Atlantic countries, with a different historical experience and a greater ability to overcome their internal contradictions, have been better able than Italy to benefit from the 'opportunities' of capitalist development offered by the past decade.¹

It is clear even from a strictly technical economic analysis that the development of Italian capitalism since the war can be divided into three well-defined periods: the period of 'reconstruction' (1945-7); the period of 'repressive' development (1948-62); and the period of 'precocious maturity' (from 1964 to the present day). The first period coincides with the governments based on collaboration of all the political forces which came out of the Resistance, and the reconstruction not only of the economic structure destroyed by the war, but of the very social relations of capitalist production, which had been shaken by the fall of fascism and by mass participation in the Resistance. The second period coincides with the governments of the Centre, the ousting of the communists and socialists, and the repression of the political, social and trade-union strength of the workers' movement. The third period coincides with the governments of the Centre Left, with the renewal of the trade-union strength of the workers' movement and the emergence of social tensions which could not be entirely mediated through the political system. The term 'precocious maturity' refers to problems of economic policy which have arisen during these years (inflation, credit restriction, depression, economic revival, renewed inflation, etc); problems typical of industrial economies which have achieved a high level of utilization of all the nation's productive resources, which is certainly not the case for Italy.

It is not possible in this article to consider the crucial period of the reconstruction.² This was a period of the greatest political and social change, and a broad spectrum of options seemed to be open at that

¹ No originality is claimed for the economic analysis underlying this article. In its main lines, the view put forward here stems from the work of well-known economists, most of them connected with the National Planning Commission of the Centre Left Governments (P. Sylos Labini, G. Fua, S. Lombardini, L. Spaventa, A. Graziani). Nor is the socio-political analysis new, being shared by professional political sociologists (A. Pizzorno and G. Galli) and by political figures on the Left (V. Foa, P. Ferraris, A. Collida). What I have tried to do here is to give a synthesis of well-known material and partial interpretations; it is my opinion that only an overall view—a 'political economy' approach—can provide an understanding of the origins and nature of the present crisis.

The reader may be struck by the absence of any discussion and judgement of the political choices facing the left. The real subject of this short reconstruction is the Italian bourgeoisie: to understand its contradictions is a necessary condition for a meaningful discussion of the alternatives of the left. This cannot however be discussed casually, and a much longer article would have been necessary to tackle it properly.

² A good selection of articles on this period will soon be published in English: *The Rebirth of Italy*, S. J. Woolf, ed. See in particular the articles by M. De Cecco and B. Beccalli.

time. Even at the level of generality in this article, it would deserve special treatment. I shall begin from the period when the main political, social and economic choices had already been taken.

1. Repressive Development

At the beginning of the 1950s very few government economists (and still less those of the opposition) expected the exceptional economic development which in fact characterized the decade. Their expectations of the future were strongly conditioned by the problems which then confronted them. They pictured Italy as a poor country, eternally starved of raw materials, and unable to procure them by exporting manufactures. The industrial base was in fact too weak for this, in relation to that of Italy's competitors. There was concern over the fall in exports of textiles, the typical industrial product of a poor country. It was well known that the situation could not be rectified by the export of agricultural commodities, whether processed or not. The end of Marshall Aid was viewed with apprehension.

However, the following decade witnessed a rapid economic development and the 'precocious' achievement of *industrial maturity*. First, by contrast with the 'under-developed' countries, Italy at the beginning of the fifties had achieved a balance of trade equilibrium and the structure of imports and exports was, in general, that of an advanced country: raw materials and manufactures were imported and manufactures exported.

Of course the imported manufactures were often of a considerably higher 'technological content' than the exports. But the list of exports had grown considerably: Italy had left behind the stage of textiles and agricultural products. At the international level there was now no barrier to the progress which other North Atlantic countries in fact experienced in the course of the subsequent decade.

Secondly, and again in contrast to the under-developed countries, Italy had considerably extended and diversified its industrial base. In particular large-scale heavy industry had been built or was being built: and this time, by contrast with the past, it was no mere 'prestige' industry arising out of state armaments expenditure, isolated from a national economic base and uncompetitive on the world market, but an efficient industry, fully utilized by demand arising from the economy for consumption, investment, and exports.

However, one other traditional feature of economic maturity was missing: that is, a sufficiently uniform geographical distribution of economic activity and reasonably similar returns for different sectors. The development of industry had been concentrated in the North, and despite considerable government intervention and the great migrations, the differential between North and South was not in the least diminished. Despite the flight from the countryside—especially in the early sixties—employment in agriculture was still very high by 1963, and the per capita income was roughly a half of that in industry. Conditions of low productivity were very common in the service sector, and even in

many industrial sectors. In 1951, out of a labour force of almost nineteen million, about seven million were employed in agriculture and only five-and-a-half million in industry. There were almost two million unemployed. In 1963 the labour force was about twenty million; the number employed in agriculture had fallen to five million two hundred thousand, and the number employed in industry had risen to something less than eight million (almost six million in industry proper and two million in the building trade). Roughly one-third of the labour force were still self-employed or family workers. The degree of urbanization, as measured by the percentage of the population living in cities with more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, had risen considerably (from 20 per cent in 1951 to 25.5 per cent in 1963). This was clearly an atypical distribution of the labour force for a mature capitalist economy, and only France—among the large advanced European countries—had something resembling it. (In 1962 France had almost four million in agriculture—a much more efficient agriculture, however—and something over seven million in industry, out of a labour force of under twenty million. Self-employed and family workers were approximately 26 per cent of the total. The degree of urbanization was even lower than in Italy: about 19 per cent.) West Germany and the United Kingdom had a much lower proportion of persons employed in agriculture and a much higher proportion in industry. Self-employed and family workers—a symptom of incomplete development of capitalist relations—were a much lower proportion. Moreover, none of the European countries had a degree of regional imbalance such as Italy had and still has, something which amounts to an administrative and political juxtaposition of two different economies and societies.³

On the basis of the available studies it is unfortunately impossible to detect the precise consequences of economic growth on the class structure. *Faute de mieux*, a reorganization of the occupational data along a rough and ready class breakdown can give very useful insights, if taken with a pinch of salt (see table opposite).⁴

Two prominent features of this analysis are worth noting: (1) There is a relative stability between the proportions of the major classes, despite the big structural transformations that Italy underwent during these 20 years. The main changes were *within* the major classes themselves (in the middle classes there was a decrease in the small petty bourgeoisie proper—of small farmers to be exact—which is more than compensated for by the increase of white-collar workers and urban self-employed; in the working class, too, the increase of urban workers roughly compensates for the fall in agricultural workers); (2) Throughout the period the industrial working class was relatively small, and the increase in its numbers rather slow (by contrast with the very large increase of white-collar workers in industry and in the tertiary sector). This feature is even more important if one thinks of the average size of Italian firms, which is very small: the number of industrial workers in factories em-

³ All data from *Anuario Italiano di Statistica*, *ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics* and *UN Demographic Yearbook*, various years. Roundings are mine.

⁴ With slight rearrangements, this table is taken from an interesting article by P. Sylos Labini in *Artribio*, Rome, June 1972. The basic data are from the censuses (1951 and 1961) and from the ISTAT survey of the labour force, 1970.

playing over 100 people was roughly two million throughout the sixties. Among the large advanced countries only France presents roughly similar features. These structural data—as we shall see—go some way towards explaining the behaviour of the unions and the left-wing parties.

The Policy Framework

How did these structural transformations come about? What was the basic mechanism of the growth process during the 'repressive' period? A useful way of introducing an answer is first to sketch the essential framework of the economic policy pursued during the 1948–63 phase of growth. First, political measures proper. From the first half of 1947 to April 1948 the political and social climate changed decisively: the Cold

CHANGES IN SOCIAL CLASS BY OCCUPATION 1951–1970

	(Thousands of persons)		
	1951	1961	1970
UPPER & UPPER-MIDDLE CLASSES *	330	300	300
MIDDLE CLASSES	8,870	8,400	9,100
1. SMALL BOURGEOISIE	7,000	6,140	6,100
Small farmers	4,500	3,500	2,600
Artisans	1,100	1,000	1,300
Shopkeepers	1,100	1,340	1,800
Self-employed in services	300	300	400
2. SALARY EARNERS	1,870	2,260	3,000
Private employees	870	960	1,600
Public employees	1,000	1,300	1,400
WORKING CLASS	9,500	9,900	9,100
in Agriculture	2,700	2,100	1,200
in Industry†	4,100	4,300	4,500
in Construction	1,300	2,000	1,700
in Trade	600	600	700
in Transport and Service	800	900	1,000
SPECIAL CATEGORIES	800	800	900
Military	290	330	350
Clergy	120	120	150
Other‡	390	450	400
TOTAL	19,500	19,500	19,400

* Large landowners, *rentiers*, entrepreneurs, management, senior bureaucrats etc.

† Workers in plants employing over 100 people were about 1,800,000 in 1961 and 2 million in 1970.

‡ Domestic servants, porters, etc.

War found an immediate response in Italy. During the period of the reconstruction social tensions had gradually eased, thanks in part to the fervent efforts of the communists. With few exceptions the old bosses had returned to their factories and discipline had been re-established in all workplaces. The communists, however, remained in the government, in many local administrations, in the central and peripheral organs of the state, and even in the prefectures and treasury. Although the left quite explicitly did not hold out a programme for transition to socialism, and allowed the conduct of economic policy to remain in the hands of the other parties, it is clear today that they stood in the way of the plans of the reconstituted bourgeois front, if only because of their limited defence of the levels of employment and standard of living of the labouring classes. In any case, given Italy's international alliances, it was unthinkable that they should stay in the government. They were therefore excluded, and their removal was confirmed by the results of the 18 April 1948 election in which the Christian Democrats came to power. What followed, the assassination attempt on Togliatti in July of that year, was the definite clarification, even for those militants who did not wish to believe it, of the fact that the period of revolutionary possibilities was over. There then began a period of deliberate repression of the power which the workers' movement still had in Italian society. The split in the trade unions together with unemployment favoured a systematic discrimination against the CGIL. A 'purged' and reorganized police force harshly repressed every mass demonstration. In brief, even the most timid bourgeois could rapidly be persuaded that the period of 'disorder' was at an end.

Monetary and Fiscal Policy

Second, monetary and fiscal policy. This was perfectly well adapted to the political climate now created, and instrumental in it. As soon as the communists were excluded from the government, Einaudi, the Minister of Finance, successfully put into action his plans for controlling inflation. He simply brought in a very tight credit squeeze, with the usual consequence of a depression in economic activity. To regard this as a 'short-term' development, however, disguises the significance of the operation: the most harmful effects on the working class were worse than those of cyclical depression, and the apologists of the great economist can correctly claim that the revival in economic activity was the stronger for it. Normally, though, they forget to refer to another fact, which few dare to claim as one of Einaudi's achievements: that is, the trend in industrial employment, which first fell sharply and then stagnated almost to the mid fifties! Einaudi's line, firmly carried out by Menichella (Governor of the Bank of Italy, 1948-60), was something more than a series of measures against inflation; it was a 'spur' to greater efficiency in the Italian industrial system, eliminating non-competitive firms, separating the organically important ones from those surviving by employing a large number of workers, and inducing them to use more modern capital intensive techniques. The 'spur' was therefore essentially being dug into the workers. This strong monetary and credit squeeze, together with the discipline of international competition which the Italian system was gradually learning, is very important in explaining the basic characteristics of capital accumulation in the fifties.

Foreign Competition

Thirdly, the opening of the Italian economy to foreign competition was undoubtedly desirable for the United States, as a part of their plan to build an economically viable Europe as a buffer against the Soviet Union. The decision, however, was bound to have stubborn opponents within the wretched capitalism inherited from fascism, and it was not due to the enthusiasm of the liberal economists that De Gasperi, the post-war Christian Democrat prime minister, should have won on this. We still know very little about how the battle for liberalization was won (the tariff rates of the fifties, for example, have not yet been thoroughly studied). A careful and progressive liberalization nonetheless took place, and the influence of international competition was added to that of the credit squeeze. The effects are well known: around the middle of the fifties it became apparent that Italy was, in fact, doing quite well in international competition, and that a growing number of manufactures were competitive and were conquering ever wider markets. Throughout this period exports were the most dynamic component of total demand, and the gap between imports and exports, which had always been typical of the Italian economy, grew smaller every year. On the one hand, the low rate of growth of internal demand induced the most enterprising firms to look for an outlet for their products outside the country. On the other, the inherited industrial base, a capacity for change which has probably been under-estimated, the 'rationalization' and investment following 1947-8, an abundance of cheap labour, and the awakening of new entrepreneurial energies, put Italy in a position to compete efficiently even with countries which had much more solid industrial traditions, on their own ground: that is, in the production of the manufactures which were to experience the greatest growth in world trade, the commodities in growing demand in the 'developed' countries (as against the commodities produced and exported by the 'under-developed' countries). This was probably why the absorption of unemployment was so slow, and the growth of productivity so high: for the products typical of advanced countries the capital intensity of techniques of production was relatively high, and investments in developing export markets, however great, therefore produced little growth in employment.

The fourth factor was another basic policy decision: to develop heavy industry with state participation (steel and energy). It was a very long-sighted decision at the time it was taken (under Senigaglia and Mattei), because it was premised on a growth in the demand for energy and steel of proportions almost unthinkable at that time. Such demand did, however, arise, and one of the greatest successes of Italy's economic development was to satisfy it at competitive prices through domestic production. It need scarcely be noted that the development of these sectors requires large investments and absorbs little employment: this is a further factor in explaining the low growth of employment during the fifties. The opening of the economy to foreign competition, and the decisive development of a strong state sector together produced a revolution in the limited scope of Italian monopoly capital. Mattei and the IRI had strong opponents: but they found sufficiently strong and coherent supporters in the administration. The Government's defence

and continual strengthening of the state sector of industry was a constant feature of the post-war period (both before and, even more, after the Centre Left governments), and it was the basis of the only real structural reform carried out against opposition from important forces within the bourgeois power bloc.

Finally, there were also a number of political measures taken to defuse the major tensions being created by Italy's 'distorted' development and to guarantee political consensus around the governmental parties. This is the explanation for the law creating the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*, the agrarian reform law, the Fanfani law on public services,⁵ and the hundreds of laws and decrees effecting transfers in favour of geographical regions, sectors of production and social layers which suffered or were left behind in the extremely uneven process of development.⁶

The Mechanism

Disagreement persists over important questions concerning the 1948-63 growth period. But the main features of this process are quite well established, and this is enough for a political analysis. On the whole, the economic growth of this period fits the main features of an export-led growth model reasonably well.

Exports were the fastest-growing components of effective demand, and private consumption the slowest.⁷ The forces behind the growth of exports have just been indicated. The main reasons for the relatively slow increase in private consumption were slowly growing employment in the industrial sector, real wages rising less than productivity (hence falling unit costs and, with stable prices, rising profits), and a modest rate of increase of per capita income in the non-industrial sector. An orthodox monetary and fiscal policy kept the pressure on demand in line with the growth in capacity, if not behind it. But, with

⁵ See N. Kogan, *A Political History of Postwar Italy*, London 1966, for the essential information. On the *Cassa*, an institution set up in 1951 to finance 'extraordinary' State and local authority expenditure in the South, see also K. Allen and M. C. MacLennan, *Regional Policy in France and Italy*, London 1971. On the agrarian reform and its political repercussions, see S. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, New Haven, 1967.

⁶ Apart from the policy measures actually taken, there were other projects which were widely discussed at this period but not actually implemented. For example, the so-called 'labour plan' proposed by the communist and socialist unions in 1950. Or even more interesting, the much discussed 'Vanoni Plan', the progenitor of the Centre Left plans, which was for the years 1956-60. These measures could not have been taken, since they tried to run counter to the essential features of the 'model' followed by the Italian economy. They relied heavily on State expenditure to solve unemployment and the Southern problem and their 'Keynesian' bent was incompatible with the liberalistic view then predominant, and with current export growth.

⁷ The 1962 indices for exports, private consumption and gross fixed investment were respectively: 430, 180 and 292, and the share of exports in GNP rose from 10.2 per cent in 1950 to 21.3 per cent in 1962. The index of productivity (output per manhour) in manufacturing, taking 1953 as 100, was 185 in 1962, according to OECD estimates. The index of wage cost per unit of output, taking 1953 as 100, was 85 in 1960 and 91 in 1962. A good summary of the main data for the 1956-64 period is to be found in R. M. Stern, *Foreign Trade and Economic Growth in Italy*, New York 1967, from which these indices were derived.

rising profit margins, capacity utilization in the industrial sector was not so low as to discourage investment; for the whole period this was the second fastest growing component of effective demand, and was understandably concentrated in the fast-growing industries, i.e., the export industries.⁸

For the moment productive resources proved no barrier. Unemployment was very high, and the type of accumulation taking place, despite its intensity, produced little reduction in the industrial reserve army: rather, in the early years, it increased it, transforming much underemployment, or 'low productive' employment in industry, into open unemployment. The conscious repression of the class unions, and the threat of unemployment, ensured an increasing 'docility' of the industrial labour force. In some sectors of industry, those less directly involved in the reorganization process and less sensitive to foreign competition, low productivity remained. This was generalized in new industrial sectors. In the first part of the 1950s not only did the government fail to try to intervene effectively in this, but there was rather a deliberate attempt to keep a broad section of the labour force tied to small-scale commerce, public administration, agriculture and depressed areas, so that open unemployment would not turn into an explosive problem. For the moment, the urban and industrial labour force was so large that an increase in the industrial reserve army was not necessary; the gains in productivity achieved in industry were high enough to permit the government (if the market mechanism did not suffice) to transfer income to less fortunate sectors or areas; and the working class was so weak that it was unable to react to the erosion of real wages resulting from the inefficiency of non-industrial sectors (and even of some industrial sectors).

During the late fifties, as industrial employment began to increase rapidly, internal migration from South to North and from the countryside to the city also increased, thus replenishing the industrial reserve army. To give some indication of the scope of this phenomenon, during the five years of the 1959-63 boom almost one million people migrated from the South to the North.

Development, then, was rapid but profoundly uneven. Capitalism was efficient in some sectors and areas and inefficient in others. For the moment the contradictions were not too great. This was the period of the consolidation of the 'ruling bloc' represented politically by Christian Democracy, which brought together under the flag of anti-communism the most divergent interests. Monopoly capital, despite the dissensions caused by some political decisions harmful to its most backward

⁸ According to Professor Kaldor's recent indictment of British economic policy, this is just the contrary of what has happened to the UK economy since the war: the commitment of all parties to full employment, and the use of fiscal policy as the main instrument for obtaining it, got Britain into a 'consumption-led' growth, the disadvantages of which, in comparison with the export-led, he explains with great care. ('Conflicts in National Economic Objectives', *Economic Journal*, March 1971.) Unfortunately Kaldor does not discuss how the British economy could have been forced into export-led growth. If this had been possible, what would have been the costs, and on whom would they have fallen?

elements, was clearly among them, and the big monopolies were the chief beneficiaries of 'repressive' development. But despite tight credit squeezes and the greater difficulties of international competition, small and medium firms also benefited: high unemployment, and the impossibility for the workers and the trade unions to guarantee the observance of labour contracts and even of legal provisions, gave small firms considerable economic freedom. It was clearly this social layer which directly benefited from the intense capital accumulation in the North. What is less evident is that many other layers—and whole geographical areas—gained *objectively* from the type of economic development which was taking place.

Underpinned by Under-development

The importance of under-development for this development is clearest on the political plane. The lack of economic development in the South (and in many other areas) prevented the emergence of a clear class confrontation and permitted the survival of social layers and relations of production which could give a base for the corrupting operations of central power. There is an excellent recent examination of the agrarian policy of the government, which constantly oscillated between initiatives for 'political consolidation' (the only possible explanation of the agrarian reform law) and modernizing reforms.⁹ In the years under consideration the former were prevalent, and enabled Christian Democracy to gain political control of much of the countryside. There is still no political analysis of the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*; but there is little doubt that the funds of the *Cassa*, and public monies in general, were an essential means to the formation of one of the most exceptional (and effective) clientele structures to have ruled Southern Italy. This succeeded in general in absorbing every incipient class alignment: from the politicians of the centre to the local 'notables' and 'barons', the administrators of the provinces and the peripheral state officials; to the main recipients of public money, the big public works contractors, big building firms, 'subsidized' firms; right down through the mafiosi to the lowest levels of the masses, corrupted and deceived by the mirage of a 'post'. Given the growing importance of this corrupt economic and political network, and the increasing decline in the economic and political importance of agriculture (between the agrarian reform and spontaneous economic development, the large absentee landlord had largely disappeared), it seems legitimate to say that the old 'bloc' of industrialists and large southern landowners was replaced by a new 'bloc', with the same representatives for the North, and for the South the local political 'barons' and the major recipients of public funds.¹⁰ More generally the same story is repeated in geographical areas marginalized during this development, and in sectors which did not participate in the unbalanced growth of capitalist efficiency. Social relations of production impeding a 'straight' class confrontation persisted; the government manoeuvred with income redistribution to

⁹ Pugliese and Mottura, *Inchiesta* (Bari), December 1971.

¹⁰ This suggestion arises from a very stimulating paper by A. Graziani, *Lo sviluppo dell'economia italiana come sviluppo di una economia aperta*, mimeo, Agnelli Foundation, Turin 1970.

create its own clientele; and later immigration followed, bleeding the South white but removing the social tensions which would have emerged had the young people stayed.

Christian Democracy

So far my observations have been of a general kind, and easily acceptable. It is difficult to go further than this. The poverty of the social sciences in Italy is nowhere more evident than in the complete absence of analysis of the really relevant questions: and nothing is more relevant for a political analysis of the *present* than a correct analysis of the formation and variations of the 'ruling bloc' whose chief party is Christian Democracy.¹¹ The behaviour of Christian Democracy today, with the marked appearance of reformist initiatives, suddenly checked by abrupt steps backward, is based on the complex structure of interests used or created by Christian Democracy, especially in this stage of development, to maintain its political hegemony. The 'imperfection' of the Italian political system, where there is no straight contest between a consistent reformist party and a conservative party, does not lie in the ideology of the two great parties, but in the particular mixture of development and under-development brought about during this period. Without understanding this it is impossible to understand anything about Italian political life.

With the move towards 'full employment' a radical change came about, since the relative equilibrium of 'repressive development' had been entirely dependent on the economic and political repression of the workers' movement and this was no longer possible with 'full employment'. We should be clear what we mean by the term 'full employment', as Italy has never achieved levels of employment of the labour force comparable to those of other European industrial countries. The process of uneven development such as Italy has experienced was bound, in peripheral areas, backward sectors and even in industry itself, to marginalize broad layers of the labour force who would in other countries be employed at high levels of productivity. One of the most intriguing aspects of post-war Italian economic development is the continuous fall, since the late 1950s, of the rate of activity (i.e. of the ratio of labour force to population). It was 43.8 per cent in 1959, falling to 40.3 per cent in 1963 and 37.4 per cent in 1968. The provisional census data (October 1971) fall to an incredibly low figure of 34.6 per cent. To give a comparative reference: it was 41.1 per cent in France (1968), 44.2 per cent in W. Germany (1969) and 49.5 per cent in Japan (1966).¹² It is impossible here to go into the discussion that this phenomenon has stimulated,¹³ except to suggest that the most convincing explanations are in terms of the low average pressure and

¹¹ The main reference for English readers on these particular aspects of the Italian political system is J. La Palombara, *Interest Groups in Italian Politics*, Princeton, N.J., 1964. Unfortunately, the usual division of labour prevents this author from putting the problem in its wider socio-economic context.

¹² Data from *ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, various years.

¹³ One attempt at Marxist interpretation is L. Meldolesi, *Disoccupazione e Esercito Industriale di Riserva in Italia*, Bari 1972. For a critical discussion see the Summer 1972 issue of *Inchiesta* (Bari).

regional imbalance of the demand for labour, and the structural transformations which have taken place (agricultural activity rates tend to be higher). Here, however, lies one of the main reasons for the paradox of tight labour markets for industry among huge reservoirs of barely concealed unemployment. There is an enormous 'wastage' of manpower, and the large reserve in the South and in the countryside has many outlets: in emigration abroad, inactivity and precarious employment. For Northern industry, *in the short term*, these reserves were closed, or opened only rather slowly. This goes some way towards explaining why the bargaining power of employed workers in the North remained fairly high throughout the 1960s.

What we mean by 'full employment' is the level and structure of the demand for labour which, given the structure of the population by residence, occupation, age and sex (i.e. the potential labour available), creates tensions on the labour market. In the early 1960s, a situation like this began to develop. Notwithstanding the large influx of immigrants to the Northern cities; the great investment boom of 1959-63;¹⁴ participation in the development process by many firms and sectors aimed at the domestic market; and the fall in average capital intensity of investments and productivity typical of this period, there was still a considerable fall in this kind of open urban unemployment, on which the previous economic and political equilibrium had been based. This made it increasingly difficult to go on with repressive development.

2. Precocious Maturity

Even a purely economic analysis immediately makes clear the great difference between the 1963-71 period and the years preceding it. Notably, prices increased overall; investments first fell and then barely recovered their 1963 level; the economic authorities engaged in 'stop-go' activity, to which they had never resorted before. Taking simply the rate of growth of national income, no big differences appear in the two periods under comparison, particularly if the crisis year of 1964 is left out (if this is done, one gets a 6.1 rate for 1961-3 and a 5.4 rate for 1964-9). This was one of the reasons that the 'malaise' of the Italian economy was not recognized as quickly as it might have been. It is only when the behaviour of investments, prices and profits—and, of course, of the labour market—is analysed, that the big differences appear. Investments practically stopped increasing. After the big fall of 1964-5 they only just, in 1969, regained the 1963 level; as a share of GNP they were much less (24.9 for total gross investments in 1963, and 21.4 in 1969). Non-agricultural wholesale prices actually decreased slightly throughout most of the 1950s, and they regained their 1953

¹⁴ The four year period 1959-63 is that of the 'economic miracle'. Something of the miraculous lingers about it even now, since the sudden boom of industrial investment in plant and machinery in those years has not really been understood. Between 1958 and 1963 gross fixed investment, excluding building, rose by 73 per cent and the share of gross investment in gross national income reached an unprecedented 24.5 per cent never to be reached again. The officially registered unemployed, who had slowly fallen during the fifties (from 1,900,000 in 1951 to 1,500,000 in 1958), fell to 504,000 in the five years from 1959 to 1963 (figures from Stern, op. cit.).

level only in the inflationary conditions of the early 1960s (1953 = 100; 1961 = 97.77; 1963 = 104)—after which they continued to increase (1963 = 100; 1969 = 110.6). But despite this, the share of profits in value added in manufacturing industry never recovered the level of the early fifties after the fall in 1963–4 (taking 1953 = 100 as the index of profit margins, they were 125 in 1963, 100 in 1965, 106 in 1966, 103 in 1968). The main reason was the much faster pace of wage increases, and the lower rate—on average—of productivity growth during the sixties. Many wages in manufacturing industry grew at a compound annual rate of 6 per cent between 1953 and 1962 and at a rate of 8.7 per cent between 1962 and 1969, whereas the corresponding rates of growth in productivity were 8 per cent and 5.7 per cent. (All data and calculations are taken from the Graziani paper). Apparently, resources were now being fully utilized as they had been in some European capitalist economies throughout the post-war period. The only difference was that Italy had reached this stage prematurely, with an incomplete industrial base, poorly distributed geographically, and with large reserves of labour occupied in low productivity sectors. The only possible comprehensive verdict must be this: Italian capitalism has been unable ‘adequately’ to resolve the problems posed by full employment; that is, it has been unable to create a new political and economic equilibrium—different from the repressive equilibrium—permitting a high level of accumulation. The development of economic policy in the last decade is well enough known, and I shall only summarize it here.

The Last Decade

As an immediate response to the intense accumulation of the 1959–63 period, there was a notable decrease in unemployment and a sharp rise in money wages. The socialist and communist trade unions were severely hit by the repression of the fifties, and—as was fully recognized in the self-critical debate after 1956—the situation was probably aggravated by an incorrect political strategy. The best cadres were removed from the factories or isolated. The *CISL* and *UIL*, not to mention the corporation unions, were at this time openly playing by the rules of the bosses, and helped considerably to break the unity of the working class. The situation, nonetheless, began to change after 1960. The situation of near ‘full employment’ made the weapon of firing, the strongest weapon of the bosses, less effective. It became apparent that the ‘new working class’—even if they had gone into the factory with the priest’s blessing—lived up to its new position of strength. Policy on the employers’ front was by no means unified: in this period there were frequent competitive wage increases aimed at hegemonizing the particular type of labour force which had become scarce. Given the reduction of the rate of growth of productivity, for the first time labour costs rose measurably. The capitalists reacted, in part by raising prices; in part, they had to accept a ‘temporary’ reduction of profit margins: international competition prevented them from unloading the whole increase in costs on to the consumer. Together with ‘cost’ inflation, the Italian economy was, however, also experiencing an intense ‘demand’ inflation largely due to persistent structural disequilibria. Italy had the most inefficient agricultural and retail trade organization of any EEC country; land prices and rents skyrocketed due

to mass urbanization without any significant public intervention in the housing market. The 'bottlenecks' were mostly concentrated in the consumer goods sector. With rapidly increasing consumption and demand, the cost of living rose, thus giving an extra push to wages.¹⁵ Together with inflation, the investment boom and the high level of internal demand provoked a marked deterioration of the balance of trade (imports increased and exports slowed down), aggravated by a strong outflow of capital (which had both speculative and political causes). The Centre Left had meanwhile been formed.

The reaction of the monetary authorities to this situation was noteworthy. The credit squeeze of autumn 1963 was markedly 'successful'. The rate of investment and of consumption, notwithstanding the re-distribution towards the workers, slowed down in 1964 and fell still further in the years to follow. Unemployment began to rise again to reach its peak in the winter of 1965-6. But inflation was 'brought under control', and the balance of trade restabilized with exceptional speed: the case of Italy was taken to be an example of correct economic policy by the OECD.

1964-7: Lost Opportunities

From the point of view of capital the four years 1964-7 can be defined as a period of 'lost opportunities'. With the incipient economic strength of labour cut off by the depression (the inadequate response of the workers' movement has also to be taken into account), those in power seemed to have lost all ability to run the economy. The only noteworthy initiative taken by the Centre Left was the nationalization of electricity. But this measure, on which the reforming elements of the Centre Left consumed their entire energy, was only the continuation of a plan already elaborated during the decade of 'repressive' development. The new measures which might have been expected of the Centre Left (as capitalist reformism) were a courageous assault on the structural distortions of Italian development, especially *outside* industry, together with the economic and political preparation of a new accumulation drive; but these were completely absent. Giolitti, the socialist budget minister, who wanted to combine a moderately restrictive short-term policy with a long-term policy of reforms in the bottleneck sectors, was forced to resign.

Above all there was no recovery of accumulation: the stimuli introduced by the government were so mild, and the renunciation of the use of public industry so evident (the course of public investments during this period was similar to that in private industry), that it seemed like a deliberate stagnation plan.

There was then no organic plan for 'unfreezing' reserves of labour in the low productivity sectors, or finding work for them in higher productivity sectors, preferably in the native area, and anyway providing adequate services (housing, transport, health, education). On paper

¹⁵ For a fuller analysis see P. Sylos Labini, 'Distribution and investment in Italy 1951-66: an interpretation, *Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Quarterly Review*, 1967, p. 316.

there was a plan: the pathetic plan of the Centre Left: but it need not even be discussed.¹⁶ In fact, following a logic scarcely influenced by the Centre Left, somewhat ambiguous 'rationalizing' interventions were going ahead, accelerating the expulsion of labour from the countryside or marginal sectors and zones without creating employment opportunities for them either on the spot, or in the rest of the country. The second 'green plan', unlike the first, was already in line with the tendency which would be most fully expressed in the 'Mansholt plan'. The *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* itself restricted its intervention to the areas of agriculture which were 'susceptible to intervention'. The *Cassa*, once its objectives had failed through general indirect incentives (subsidies to agriculture, creation of infrastructure), went on to a new phase of widespread stimulus to industrial activity, working together with various centres of state power (Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Public Works). Resources were still scarce and badly used; the 'conjuncture' was moreover shaking the weak structures of southern industry: industrial employment fell dramatically instead of rising, while the exodus from the countryside accelerated. The results were unemployment, under-employment and emigration. To control this growing social and economic crisis the Centre Left, with the same methods of clientele politics and corruption, created 'red barons' in the place of the old 'black barons': undoubtedly the most notorious example was the entourage of Mancini, PSI Minister of Labour.

Meanwhile in the North, private and public capital confronted the situation as best they could. These were the years of notorious 'rationalizations' without investment, of the 'squeezing' of labour, of crazy speed-ups. Productivity in industry rose at a very high rate. Taking the 1964-9 period, productivity in industry was increasing just as fast as during the fifties. What is noteworthy is that the rate of increase of industrial investment during the same period was zero. As wage increases had been drastically reduced (in practice only the sliding scale worked) profits rose and the distribution of income became worse (even if the capitalists no longer achieved the 'fabulous' profit margins of 1959-61). Private savings again began to grow very fast, but, towards the end of this period, with lagging investments, they only served to finance a strong exodus of capital from the country. It was somewhat absurd to be *at one and the same time* an exporter of labour and of capital. But it was the only possible way for a country with a fast growth of exports which *wanted* to keep internal demand depressed without being forced to devalue. These years also saw intense and general concentration of Italian capital, and a strong impulse towards internationalization of capital. The most ambitious projects developed in the period which immediately followed (e.g. the liquidation of Montedison as a private group; the fusion of Fiat-Citroen and Dunlop-Pirelli; the substantial inroads made by foreign capital). But in this period its basis lay in the economic difficulties of many firms during the 'recession', and the efforts of others to conquer foreign markets, not only through the export of commodities produced in Italy, but also—and this was to become more frequent in the subsequent years—through capital exports.

¹⁶ See the article by Bill Warren in *NLR* 72, or A. Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism*, London 1965, p. 196.

It therefore seemed that a situation of 'repressive equilibrium' had returned. But there was no equilibrium. Everything was based on the depression of internal demand, and nothing had been provided for the moment when economic activity would again increase. Moreover, social tension was rising beyond all possibility of control in the factories and in the marginalized areas of the country, for reasons just noted. But even in other areas of the country, and in other social layers, this was happening. The student revolt, for example, took everyone unawares.

1966-69: The Contradictions Mature

From 1966 to 1967, the level of economic activity began to recover. Investments in plant and machinery, which are the ones that count, rose very little. In general, the recovery of investments (including building, stimulated by legislative incentive) was rather modest: they came nowhere near the share of investment in income on the scale achieved in 1959-63. Internal demand rose rather more (the multiplier had increased) and employment rose with it. But there was nothing exceptional, and certainly no adequate response to the conditions of unemployment and under-employment in the country. Meanwhile the percentage of the labour force (employed and unemployed) out of total population continued to fall: in the case of Italy, this was certainly not a sign of a greater propensity to idleness, but rather of the inability of the economic system to provide work for all those who wanted it.

The hesitant signs of recovery were, however, enough to give rise to the greatest wave of workers' struggles in the history of the Italian trade-union movement. Italy (together with Canada, Ireland and the US) is a structurally 'strike-prone' economy, or at least was during the sixties (days lost per thousand employees for 1960-9 were: Italy 1,397, Ireland 1,018, Canada 1,008, US 977, UK 268). But in 1969 she far outstripped her closest competitors (Italy 4,110, Canada 2,550, Ireland 1,110, US 1,390, UK 510).¹⁷ It is not easy to give a full explanation of what happened between 1968 and 1971. It is grossly inadequate to apply the usual economists' scheme to workers' struggles in these years, mechanically relating high levels of unemployment to low wage rises, and low levels to bigger wage increases. There was certainly a deeper social crisis, part of a generalized collapse of confidence in institutions. The workers experienced an upturn in employment (for the small section of the active population who were employable in industry in its distorted economic development—young adult men living in the North) and therefore fewer redundancies. But growing discontent with the workers' living conditions, within and without the factory, also played a part: inside, because of the worsening conditions of work; outside, because of the growing weight of unemployment, inadequate transport and services, worsening housing conditions and the rising cost of living, hence the doubling of work. There was a moment in which this rage exploded, encouraged by more diffuse social agitation. One manifestation of this social unrest, and of the limits of the ability of the institutions to mediate it, was the students' revolt. Another, in the

¹⁷ Data from *Industrial Relations Journal*, autumn 1971, editorial comment.

South, where it was endemic; the Reggio revolt. The fact that Reggio was used by the fascists does not negate the fact that it was caused by the same distorted process of capitalist development, which in the factories had to resort to putting the squeeze on labour.¹⁸ Although any explanation must be mediated through cultural and social complexes, capitalist *economic* development in general, and in particular the distorted development of Italy, lay at the origin of these tensions.

Factory struggles were on the increase in 1968 and still more in 1969, but wage increases were still low. The inflationary impulse came above all from outside, in the form of higher prices of raw materials (the capitalists took advantage of this to upgrade their profit margins) and later in the form of increasing costs of currency (Italy in the end brought her rates of interest into line with those prevalent abroad). The impulse to inflation from wages was particularly strong in 1970, with the new contracts and plant bargaining. The rate of increase of wages in manufacturing industry for 1959-69 was 9.1, from 1969 to 1970, 23.4, from 1969 to 1971, 16.6. Since productivity first dropped and then no more than regained its 1969 level, the increase of labour costs per unit of output has been very high: about 36 per cent between the first quarter of 1969 and the last of 1971.¹⁹ There were, however, some differences from 1962 to 1964. The struggles were more bitter, and undoubtedly until the end of 1969 and the first part of 1970, industrial production suffered (but not as much as is made out): exports fell, following internal production, and imports soared. Unlike 1962-4 no strong stimulus to consumption resulted from increases in wage-contracts, and investments fell still more rapidly (especially in building, and for motives quite independent of the conjuncture). In the second half of 1970, probably, demand was already beginning to flag. It was precisely then that the government intervened, taking some hundreds of millions of lire out of the economy, giving the reason for this decision as the state financial deficit, but in reality aiming at the growing deficit in the balance of payments. The underlying official analysis presumed that excessive demand existed relative to supply, which had slowed down in industry because of workers' struggles and had the usual bottlenecks in the non-industrial sectors. This was maybe true up to a few months earlier: but with falling private investments in manufacturing, a definite slump in construction and quite low increases in workers' consumption (with so many hours lost, the working week reduced by contract and debts to pay), these depressive measures were either a blunder or an intentional attack on the level of activity and employment. In any case, since 1970 industrial production has stopped increasing and the Italian economy is stuck in the longest period of stagnation experienced since the war.

The Left and the Unions

Among the parliamentary left, and even outside it, there is often a tendency to minimize the role of workers' struggles in producing a crisis. It is understandable that this should happen in the face of the

¹⁸ See P. Ferraris' analysis of the 100 days of Reggio in *Giornale Critica*, No. 25.

¹⁹ *Rassegne Annuale della Banca d'Italia*, 1971 and 1972.

campaigns the right mounts. But the result, inevitably, is a total failure to understand the real nature of the contradictions confronting Italian capitalism. It must be recognized that workers' struggles, because of their effects on wages, but most especially because of their length and unpredictability, were probably one of the crucial factors in transforming the situation. They were certainly not the only factor. The economic policy of the government had a share of responsibility in aggravating the situation in 1970, and it has certainly not helped to resolve it in 1971. However, there is no doubt that the struggles of 1969-71 showed all the fragility and inflexibility of labour organization and the mediocrity of the management of vast sectors of Italian industry. It is reasonable to suppose that if the increase in productivity in 1964-8 had been obtained with different methods, through machines rather than men, there would have been less tension and the struggles would not have generated the fall of productivity which has, in fact, resulted. The workers' struggles dealt a heavy blow to the system.

Why then do the trade unions and the left parliamentary parties refer in such an ambiguous way to the great outburst of struggles of the past three years, and their results? Why do they not say (and above all why do they not think) that capital has been placed in difficulty? The main reason is that—with an exceptional response from the masses, one often in advance of trade-union initiative—the struggle went beyond the framework of the political strategy of the workers' movement, and completely swept aside the political formula (the Centre Left) which was still the only point of reference for the left parties. I shall go on to say more about what the Centre Left was and what it was thought to be. At any rate, in 1968, the Centre Left was no more than an empty parliamentary formula which could not discipline the actions of the various social forces, including the trade unions. There were important sections of the trade unions which supported the Centre Left politically, and those who did not were engaged in 'constructive criticism'.

When a situation of relative tension on the labour market re-appeared, and the first struggles began, the trade unions were politically dis-oriented. It was lucky for the movement that, in the absence of political leadership from the top (or in contradiction to it), the action of the trade unions initially followed an 'organizational logic'. This in general led to positions which went along to some extent with the drive from the base and made it possible to transform its spontaneous expression into an organizing force for the trade unions and to extend the struggle into sectors or zones where it was not strong. This was fortunate because it permitted the trade-union movement to acquire a whole series of political demands and organizational forms which advanced the consciousness of the masses considerably.

It is, however, quite evident that this logic did not respect the requirements of 'national' economic policy in this particular period. This also explains the direct participation of the trade unions in reforms (mainly in support of intervention in the housing sector) in the period of the contracts. Some people have seen this as a way of diverting the workers' attention away from the problems in the factories. In reality it was a need felt by the workers, and used by the trade unions for their own

reasons. Struggles of the intensity of those of 1968-71 require a political outlet: beyond a certain point it is impossible to direct them in purely 'trade-union' terms. In taking the initiative over reforms the trade unions were asking a political system which was in crisis to carry out the only medium-term strategy which *seemed* feasible in the parliamentary context. Asking for 'reforms' and promising a 'responsible' attitude should they be carried out is, of course, one and the same thing.

By calling off the 7 July general strike in 1971 the trade unions lost ground to political forces and parliamentary settlements. From then on they lost the initiative in the struggle for reforms, and their dependence on the political forces in the workers' movement increased. The trade unions returned to the more restricted role assigned to them by the political system, and which they had escaped from only under pressure from the rank and file in the preceding period. They thereby continued to refuse to develop the political component of the struggle which had been so important in 1969-70, and on which a large part of their success actually depended.

3. The Centre Left

In the early sixties there were some popular interpretations of Italian capitalism which, in subsequent years, have been shown to be quite incorrect. That is, it was believed that Italian capitalism could advance from the model of 'repressive' accumulation to a new, let us say, 'integrated' model without too much difficulty; and the Centre Left was seen as the parliamentary representative of a partially renewed hegemonic grouping. The workers would participate in this grouping, with representation for some of their political organizations, while others engaged in 'constructive' criticism from the outside. Some reactionary interests would be expelled from it. A remarkable political and social pact would thus be concluded: wages truce, social peace, electoral consensus, plus reforms which would make a decisive improvement in the standard of living of the workers and correct the most obvious distortions that had accumulated in the previous decade.

This view was by no means unintelligent. But it credited Italian capitalism and its political representatives with a degree of foresight, and an ability to understand the implication of the new strength of the workers, in short an ability to hegemonize the situation, which it was far from possessing. It is true that, as such views recognized, the 'integrated model', in abstract, represented the most advanced long-term solution for Italian monopoly capital, and would have brought it into line with the great bourgeoisies of the North Atlantic countries where the operation had already been carried out. There did not, however, seem to be the conditions in which both political democracy and the drive to accumulate could flourish (and every self-respecting capitalism must pursue both objectives as long as they are compatible).

To the intelligent capitalist, the economic, political and even international events of the early sixties must have sounded a warning. Rising inflation demonstrated that the most flexible labour reserves were now exhausted; from now on the resources for further expansion would have

to be sought in an endless labour to 'rationalize' the whole economic system: (a) by a better use of territory and structure in order to minimize diseconomies and unproductive investment and to fully utilize labour with no mobility (regional policy); (b) by planning education to fit the foreseeable developments of the labour market (manpower planning); (c) by the 'rationalization' of low-productivity sectors (public administration, commerce, building, agriculture), both to control the inflation to which they gave rise through their effect on the cost of living, to 'liberate' labour for use in the industrial sector, and to provide the state with the instruments it needed to control the economy in conditions of full employment. Most of the much-vaunted reforms of these years (in housing and urban redevelopment, transport, retail trade, agriculture, education and public administration) can *also* be interpreted as conscious interventions by the public authorities to create structural transformations which were necessary if the Italian economy was to go on growing in the North Atlantic context at a high rate: and therefore to approach the distribution and 'productivity' of the labour force peculiar to the most advanced capitalist countries. In any case the years of 'easy development' were over.

The Mirage of Reforms

Meanwhile the political equilibrium which had been so important in the rapid development of the fifties *was being undermined by its own success*. 'Full employment' gave the left a degree of economic and political power which it had not had since 1948, and which could be a serious impediment to the process of accumulation necessary in these conditions. To the observer of the Italian political scene at that time, the Centre Left might well have appeared to be a clever political response by Italian capitalism to the uncertainties of the new decade: designed to resolve some grave structural problems confronting continued accumulation with *precisely* the forces which might have paralysed it. Looking at some of the reform projects of this period, at the attitudes and intentions of some of the political forces in the Centre Left, this was quite a logical conclusion to draw. It might, in fact, be thought that Italian capitalism was taking the opportunity of the need to intervene to correct the model of development, precisely to 'buy' political assent (and economic assent in the form of a wages truce) from the workers' movement.

An important qualification must be made. The requirements of capital accumulation are not the only variable to be considered if we are to understand the reformist programme of the Centre Left. The other crucial variables are the social and political relations in which capitalist development has to take place. We have just seen that some of the reforms of the Centre Left were aimed at structural transformations (lower numbers and higher output per head in agriculture; reorganization of retail trade; a more efficient government bureaucracy; a better educational system; more and cheaper housing) which would have removed serious bottlenecks to further economic growth. But none of them, *per se*, was strictly necessary; the time sequence was by no means pre-determined; the burden of costs might have been borne by different classes; and their welfare and efficiency aspects might have been

differently balanced. The strictly necessary structural transformations could have come about in many different ways, either spontaneously or by force of the state; in an authoritarian or in a democratic context. In the situation Italy faced at the beginning of the sixties, the problem was apparently posed in the context of democracy and the reforms under discussion, apart from satisfying the requirements of capital, were designed to benefit the workers: higher employment, rising real wages, more housing, schools, health services, transport, etc. There was above all to be more public power; power of the state in which the workers' representatives were to participate. Some even saw these reforms as instruments of an 'almost' revolutionary advance.

This came about because, at the time, there seemed to be no other political formula which could guarantee at one and the same time capital accumulation, full employment and political democracy. Italy was, moreover, on the eve of the great period for European social democracy, and to present the Centre Left as a forerunner of this gave the appearance of rationality to the confused political movements of the period.

It is now clear that the Centre Left was not this ideal, even at the very beginning. It makes no sense to speak today of the failure of the Centre Left (meaning the failure of 'democratic' reformism). If anything, the Centre Left has been a great success, as the instrument of confusion and corruption in the workers' movement.

The Origins of the Centre Left

Giuseppe Tamburrano has recently given us a political account of the formative years of the Centre Left.²⁰ The most important problems of interpretation are, however, still unresolved; and to understand what they are, it is very useful to bear in mind the scheme of the 'rational' behaviour of Italian capitalism (and of the 'typical behaviour' of social democracy) which is quite inadequate as an actual explanation. This scheme does, however, put together the essential aspects of the economic and political crisis of the time very clearly, and—by contrast—helps us to understand the particular responses it evoked.

Firstly, on the origins of the Centre Left. Today it still seems as if there was a relative autonomy between the internal political process leading to the formation of the Centre Left, the international thaw which permitted it (Camp David), and the objective change in the strength of the workers' movement which gave it a structural basis. But they were clearly not distinct and independent. It is very important for an understanding of what happened then and of the situation today to clarify the relationship between these three processes, especially the degree of understanding achieved, in the political process, of the enormous role the workers' movement could have played once integrated into a new political equilibrium, and the urgency of this task if accumulation was to continue.

²⁰ In brief, it was an open recognition that the public authorities had to intervene—and limit private initiative—more thoroughly and in a larger number of fields, most of them directly connected with the welfare of workers (housing, transport, regional policy, schools, etc). G. Tamburrano, *Il Centro-Sinistra*, Feltrinelli, 1971.

One's first instinct is to say that the most important elements of Italian capitalism were certainly not fully aware of the changes taking place with 'full employment': at the beginning of the 1960s it would have been difficult to find such a lucid declaration of the tasks of a reformist government as was given by Gianni Agnelli to *Espresso* last autumn.²¹ If there were forces operating with this perspective, they were certainly not the dominant forces; had they been, there would probably have been a much greater resistance to the expulsion of the most backward elements of the political bloc. What then were the stimuli to the political process which produced the Centre Left? Very probably they were quite diverse, and the need to solve the imminent structural problems could ~~not~~ have had a very important place among them. It cannot be excluded that one objective was to deal a final blow in the Cold War, since one thing at stake was the division of the socialist/communist bloc.

The mass of the workers' movement too, however, was 'unprepared' for the Centre Left, taking the Centre Left to mean an 'integrating' reformist plan. The harsh repression of the previous period, its political meaning and historical traditions, gave no guarantee of a coherent reformist bloc. The trade-union movement, in particular, neither wanted nor was able to support the burden of control over wages and strikes. It was deep in an organizational crisis, created above all by the previous repression, but also by an inadequate understanding of the political and economic changes which had taken place in the previous decade: the movement's power in the factory was at a very low ebb and the struggles of 1960-4 caught it unprepared.²² It was unthinkable that working-class spontaneity could be controlled without adequate organizational means, without a 'delegation' of power by the vanguard. The trade unions were therefore obliged to take advantage of the new situation to go back to the factories, to win over the new vanguard emerging in struggles. This was the foremost task: any idea of control—which was subjectively premature (see the discussion on incomes policy at this period)—was, in fact, impossible and incompatible with the logic of strengthening the union organizations.

The CPI and the Working Class

Furthermore, the political parties of the workers' movement—the Communist Party in particular—were not simply reformist parties. This was, of course, because of their historical traditions in the immediate and recent past; the repression of the previous decade; and their international links. But it was above all because these parties too had come to represent heterogeneous interests, even if they did so much less than Christian Democracy; they too were the products of a

²¹ Data on unionization are fairly poor. The following—which refer to the sum of the members of the three largest political unions for the engineering and metallurgical industries (c. 25 per cent of all industrial employees) are probably fairly representative. Unionization was very high (c. 50 per cent) in the late forties, up to 1951-2, before and just after the political split in the single Confederation of industrial unions. It went on falling until 1960-1, to barely 20 per cent (60 per cent of these in the socialist and communist unions). It increased to 27 per cent in 1963-4, and, after falling somewhat in the crisis years of 1965-7, reached 34 per cent in 1970 after the great struggles of 1969. Now it is again on the decrease. (B. Beccalli, 'Scioperi e organizzazione sindacale', *Rassegna Italiana di sociologia* 1971, n. 3).

society with profound economic and civil inequalities. It would be foolish to look for some classical purity in them. But there was no clear classical 'hegemony' either. Just as monopoly capital had been unable to win sufficient predominance over the other conservative interests, the forces of the workers' movement were unable to win a clear hegemony (whether reformist or in some sense revolutionary: in any case *classical*) over the non-working class interests which expressed their protest through them. The shopkeepers, poor peasants and artisans were all layers which would see a coherent capitalist reformism as damaging to their interests. The membership of the socialist and communist parties is heavily weighted in favour of industrial workers, and wage earners in general. In 1963 40.2 per cent of CP members were industrial workers and 11.3 per cent agricultural wage earners, 10 per cent were sharecroppers, 5.7 per cent small farmers and 6.4 per cent artisans and shopkeepers. 23 per cent were housewives and pensioners. Only 3 per cent were professional, student and 'white collar' workers. By contrast, in 1961, professional people, students and white-collar workers were 18.1 per cent of the membership of Christian Democracy, while wage earners were only 26.7 per cent, housewives and pensioners 30 per cent, artisans and shopkeepers 9.2 per cent and small farmers 12.2 per cent.²² But it is not the membership which determines the policy orientation of mass electoral parties like the CP and the Christian Democrats. They have to glean votes from quite wide and heterogeneous strata of the population, and in their policy they cannot be insensitive to the need for this. The 'strategy of alliances' between the working class and other 'popular' strata—one of the basic points of the political programme of the Communist Party—therefore goes together with the recognition that a mass party of 19 million votes cannot be the party of the industrial workers alone. This was true in the fifties, with a smaller working class surrounded by large masses of peasants, unemployed and precariously employed urban proletarians. But it remained true in the sixties as well. Wage earners in the industrial sector proper are still a minority and, after the increase of the late fifties and early sixties, there is no sign of a tendency for them to increase to a percentage of the population comparable with that in Germany or Britain. Moreover, a new service economy is rapidly developing on top of the old tertiary sector. Of course, the outlook of the 'working class' should have hegemony in the alliance. But what hegemony means in the day-to-day practice of the Communist Party is a question I cannot tackle properly here.²³

The basic stability in the proportions of the main classes, and the extent of the support that the large parties receive, go a good way to explaining the relative stability of the Christian Democrat and CP votes in a period which saw the transition from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban and industrial society. The Christian Democrats were in fact better entrenched in the countryside than the Communists, and pro-

²² Data from G. Galli and A. Prandi, *Patterns of Political Participation in Italy*, Yale, Newhaven and London 1970. This book summarises the results of a large American-sponsored project on party membership and structure and electoral behaviour in Italy, and is the best source of data on these phenomena so far.

²³ S. Tarrow's book, quoted above, remains one of the best examples of concrete analysis of the policy of the PCI during the fifties.

portionately less in the large industrial cities. But immigration hit the share croppers and agricultural wage earners, the stronghold of the CP in the countryside, particularly hard. And urbanization also meant a large increase in the middle classes (wage earners or self-employed), who are mainly Christian Democrat voters. Besides, persistent ideological cleavages, mainly connected with the influence of the Church, mean that a significant share of the working-class vote goes to the Christian Democrats, especially in the 'white regions' of North Lombardy and Venetia.

In general the reasons for the 'failure' of the Centre Left are well known. As we have already noticed, the political bloc formed during the decade of 'repression' around Christian Democracy was extremely heterogeneous: Christian Democracy organized the consensus wherever it could under the banner of anti-communism. The disparity in economic and social levels in the country made for two very different situations: monopoly capital of the North together with public industry, on the one hand, and on the other the socio-economic boss class of the South, partly traditional, and partly created. In the decade of repressive development we have seen why these interests did not come into open contradiction. But with the reappearance of the political and economic strength of the workers' movement the contradictions emerged rapidly, and would have done so even if the Centre Left had represented a coherent 'reforming' plan able to integrate significant forces of the workers' movement into the new political equilibrium. This operation necessitated quite sweeping reforms, together with a political readjustment of the ruling bloc. The two things could not have been achieved painlessly by Christian Democracy and the bloc of interests which it represented. To take Christian Democracy first, it could even have conceded some of its clientele to the parties of the workers' movement which supported the Centre Left operation, as long as the clientele ~~method~~ for giving political stability to the economic and social crisis could have been maintained (especially in the South): Christian Democracy was sure of controlling the greatest resources and therefore conserving its political hegemony. But since the division of forces would have been too favourable to the left-wing parties, and above all because the very method of government would have been undermined by an effective reforming process, Christian Democracy would have experienced an uncontrollable crisis. For some of the leading interests in the old ruling bloc (elements of monopoly capital and public industry) there would still have been a way of carrying on accumulation and exploitation. But for others, tied to sectors or zones which would suffer from reforming intervention, the experience would have been disastrous and was something to be fought at all costs.

What we know of the political life of this period shows the enormous political strength, within Christian Democracy and the ruling bloc, of the interests which we can for convenience define as 'backward', in the sense that they express the backwardness of Italian capitalism as compared with the economic and social systems of more 'advanced' countries. This backwardness is only partially 'hereditary'. In a large part it is deliberate, and instrumental in maintaining political equilibrium. At the same time, this shows the weakness, the need to com-

promise, and the inability of monopoly capital to take hegemony, when it was faced with a political task which, even if it was not at first understood, became more and more clear.

The Contradictions Explode

The immediately apparent phenomena are only the wider socio-political effects of a frustrated attempt at reforms. Conservative and reformist forces are so finely balanced as to impede any clear direction of the economy or effective control of emerging social tensions. The reformist forces did not succeed in achieving real political hegemony and building a new social bloc. They could not, therefore, get the main reforms through the political process and were prevented from directing the country into the pattern of social and economic development they had put forward in the National Plan.²⁴ But they were strong enough to disturb any alternative plan, and to create problems for many of the social strata which would have been hit by a reformist policy. Moreover, the weakness of the government and the lack of coherent leadership were widely felt. They were not only a product of the tensions characterizing the late sixties, but reinforced them. Something had come loose in the repressive fabric of the capitalist state, and people—on the right and on the left—felt it.

Education is one obvious weak link. Universities and high schools were hard hit by the student movement, and, especially in the large cities, few of them could be run in the 'good old way'—to the amazement and discomfort of most teachers. Though they were mostly opposed to the aims of the students, large groups of teachers were fairly quick to pick up the strike methods used by them (and by workers) to press wage and status demands, mainly of a very corporate kind. The tactic of the Centre Left education ministers was to yield to the strongest pressure of the day, thus creating discontent among almost everyone and jeopardizing any long-term reform project. Selection was relaxed, without giving teachers any means for tackling the problems of mass schooling. The rapid switch from an elitist ethos to non-selectivity found most teachers unprepared and hostile: they also resented the government's 'weakness' with the students, and felt they had no backing in their efforts to restore 'order' in the schools. (The police and judiciary felt the same. In general the uncertainty of the government in the face of social pressures provoked a wave of reaction inside the state institutions.) On the other hand, the concessions over finance and status were never enough, and did not really change the teachers' attitude towards the government. Certainly they could not change the negative attitude of most parents. Again, as in the previous case, the govern-

²⁴ Nobody really expects capitalist plans to be 100 per cent fulfilled. Even if they are not, they can fulfil equally useful purposes. But the degree of non-fulfilment of the Piacentini 1966-70 plan is a symptom of complete political failure. Though the actual rate of growth was higher than that planned (6 per cent instead of 5 per cent) the basic investment, employment and regional targets (the targets, that is, whose fulfilment depended on state intervention and a correction of the 'natural' export-led pattern of growth) were all missed by a wide margin. This has been frankly acknowledged by the planning authorities (see: 'Obiettivi e risultati del programma 1966-70', in *Mondo Economico*, 18 September 1971).

ment aroused widespread reaction without having succeeded in making a real reform in this crucial sector of an advanced economy.

The most important example, of course, is the government's labour policy. Through a skilful campaign the media persuaded the middle classes that the government was very weak towards the workers, and that the economy was being ruined by the demands and behaviour of the workers. There was, in fact, quite an intense pace of strikes, slow-downs and demonstrations, but the media exaggerated their effects. Again, though the reformist bloc had not gained real hegemony, the right wing managed to elicit from broad middle-class layers the same response as if this had occurred. The 'independent' press was throughout this period the main weapon of the moderate right wing. Bombs—imputed to far-left groups—were the instrument of the extreme right, and quite effective.

The weakness of the Centre Left government, its inability to get some real change through, the climate of uncertainty and tension and the final economic crisis, go some way towards explaining voting behaviour in the recent elections (the administrative elections of June 1971 and the general election of June 1972). The result was a rightward shift, with a large increase in the small neo-fascist MSI, particularly in the South.²⁵ Reforms, just like revolutions, must be carried out swiftly, and the government must show strength and determination; otherwise it will create opposition not only among those whose interests are threatened by the declared policy, but also among those whose expectations have been aroused. All this is fairly inevitable. What is not inevitable is that the discontent should be used by the right-wing parties, as it actually was.

The policy of the Centre Left (or its lack of policy) was criticized from both right and left; if there were social groups whose interests were threatened by the reforms, there were others that could have benefited and that probably resented the failure to pursue a consistent left-wing policy. Here the problem can only be stated: to explain why in the end a right-wing movement appeared—basically in the South, but not only there—would require both more complete structural data (essentially on class structure) and a thorough discussion of the inadequacies of left-wing policies, of a kind I cannot undertake here.

The reaction of the ruling classes to the economic crisis, the mounting right-wing campaign and the first symptoms of a rightward electoral shift (in the June 71 elections), was a parallel swing to the right which put an end to the Centre Left government. In a hectic parliamentary session in December 1971, a Christian Democrat neanderthal was elected

²⁵ The *scuffita* of the left wing is mainly due to the disappearance of the PSUP, which did not get any of its MPs re-elected, and to the slight setback suffered by the PSI. The Communists held their ground, and even slightly increased their vote, for the first time reaching the nine million mark. The electoral behaviour of the South should be considered separately. Here even the PCI has lost ground (—0.5 per cent of total votes), mostly in areas where it was relatively well established. (Apulia, Campania, Sicily). Taking into account the losses of the PSUP (—2.2) and PSI (—2.1), the left lost almost 5 per cent of the votes in the South (approximately 1.5m). The MSI share has leapt from 6.1 per cent to 13.7 per cent of the vote, making it the third largest party in the South, after the Christian Democrats and the PCI.

President of the Republic. Political elections were brought forward a year (to June 1972), and were fought by most parties on far more right-wing programmes than those for the 1968 elections. The government emerging from the elections is a reactionary 'Centre' coalition, which lists among its ministers some quite incredible come-backs from the fifties. A successful attempt has been made, by Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, to halt the move towards a merger of the major union confederations, which was well under way at the end of last year and would have produced a powerful single confederation before the wages round due at the end of this year. The Centre Left's very delicate balance of power could not be maintained amidst the social and political tensions which characterized the late sixties: and the Christian Democrats tipped the balance towards the right. Quite plausibly, they feared that a hesitating prosecution of the Centre-Left formula would have cost them more than any other political group. They are heavily dependent on middle-class support and deeply compromised with those interest groups which had been threatened by the reform programme. Heavy losses to the right were thought to be inevitable, without any compensation to the left, where the socialists would take most of the gains: losses on both fronts were the most likely prospect. For an electoral party it was a panic situation, and the swift right-wing move was a fairly rational answer, from an internal organizational point of view. And it paid, too, since the Christian Democrats, fighting the electoral campaign on an outspoken Centre-Right platform, suffered no losses.

4. The Present Crisis

Every month, the best economists of the regime pounce on the monthly statistical bulletin to analyse the indices of industrial production for the signs of a possible industrial recovery. Given how these indices are compiled—small variations are meaningless—they would do as well to read the tea leaves. The Italian economy inclines to miracles, the 'animal spirits' of the investors move in their own mysterious ways, and astrology is the best means we have for predicting these things.

But for those who do not believe in miracles, the only way is to take a certain distance from the monthly indices of the economic situation (and equivalent indications of the political situation) and base ourselves on a broader historical understanding. It then becomes clear that Italian capitalism is today in a somewhat critical situation.

The terms of the crisis are, in the last analysis, quite simple.

1. We can probably expect a weakening of the stimuli to development from abroad, and an intensification of international competition. This creates still further difficulties in an internal situation which is already quite precarious. If Italian capitalism is to be viable against foreign competition, which it will at all costs try to be, a greatly increased amount of resources must be given over to strengthening the competitiveness of the 'progressive' sectors of the economy—to 'strengthen the strong'—which would divert them from the attempt at 'political stabilization' (the expansion of public and private consump-

tion, redistribution of income to under-privileged areas and sectors, the protection of 'nascent industries', etc). In moments of crisis capital can impose hegemony which it cannot maintain 'in the long run': at such moments much is sacrificed to this.

2. But this time the task is a very difficult one, and 'short-term' measures are not enough. The Italian economy faces international competition in very disadvantageous circumstances. On the one hand its labour costs are now at similar levels to those of the rest of Europe. On the other, its industrial structure is much weaker. It is true that with the Centre Left and the crisis, industrial and financial concentration, an essential prerequisite for the type of competition to be expected in the future, was strengthened. (To all intents and purposes we now have only two major industrial and financial trusts: FIAT and the State Participation group. The recent fate of Montedison is very instructive as regards the plans of monopoly capital. Olivetti is in a state of crisis; so is Pirelli, an international holding, with a centre of gravity which is always likely to shift). But outside these major strongholds, and even within them, the weakness of the industrial structure is alarming, and is deeply affected by the fall in accumulation in 1963-71. The crisis, now endemic in the South, and disastrous for some sectors and some types of firms, is particularly serious for a group of medium-sized firms which should have been the base for a broadening and consolidation of Italy's industrial structure. They had developed rapidly in the boom years, but they have been unable to make the necessary leap (in technology, marketing and financing) to confront the current national and international conjuncture. Public capital lacks the resources, human as much as financial, to respond to the demands for intervention from all sides.

'Precocious Maturity'

3. The technical and economic problems alone are complicated enough. But the basic problem is that Italian capitalism has to face them in a state of 'precocious maturity', and in the midst of a social and political crisis of huge dimensions.

Precocious maturity means that because of the particular process of capital accumulation in Italy, tensions appear on the labour market (or, at least, the employed workers acquire bargaining power) despite the existence of large reserves of labour 'locked' in low-productivity areas or sectors or in layers of the population which do not appear as part of the labour force because capital accumulation cannot use them. But this means that without the assent of the labour organizations (it would be difficult enough even with this) there is very limited scope for capitalist accumulation, which can be obstructed by workers' struggles as soon as it gets under way.

4. Furthermore, there is a risk in attempts to 'unfreeze' the enormous reserves of labour in low-productivity sectors (by the Mansholt plan in agriculture, the liquidation of artisan and low-capitalized industry, use of the local and central public authorities: in short, 'capitalist rationalization'). Where there is growing anger against a state which makes emigration necessary, and even the possibilities of migration are

restricted, if these attempts are not accompanied by immediate increases in employment (in 'efficient' sectors), they can produce unbearable social tensions which cannot easily be controlled by the spectrum of 'constitutional' parties. This is especially, but not exclusively, true for the Mezzogiorno. But in the short and medium term there are almost insuperable obstacles to a big expansion of 'efficient' industrial employment in the under-developed areas of the country. The accumulated contradictions appear insoluble: the strength of labour (organized or not) can block a recovery in accumulation; the resources of the ruling class seem insufficient either to 'strengthen the strong' sectors for the purposes of international competition or to create protected industry in the South, or even to control the social tensions now appearing in the country; an important section of the political class and the interests it represents remains implacably hostile to 'rationalization' plans. The politicians control only a part of the accumulation process: in the other more important part, they have to operate indirectly (requiring 'adequate' profits, the right political climate) and in ways which take time, whereas time is a very important variable in the development of the crisis.

Speculation about future political development is bound to be of very limited usefulness. Only a few things can be assessed with some plausibility.

The Prospects for the Right . . .

As we have seen, the right-wing reaction now taking place—as presently represented by the Andreotti 'Centre' government—has been caused by fairly short-sighted party considerations and seems desperately inadequate to the tasks a government should measure up to, if it is to operate as the Board of Directors of the bourgeoisie. It now looks as though we are witnessing a rerun of 1963–4, this time with a sharper rightward shift. A rightward shift of the *broad* consensus is, however, unlikely. Social tensions are brought under control by increasingly repressive means ('law and order' is being restored after the turbulent years of the confrontation and the 'hot autumn'). Economic stagnation is used to keep the workers' movement down. Clearly it is hoped that unemployment (which is creeping upwards), organizational difficulties inside the unions (the unification process has come to a standstill), their political isolation and intimidation (the press campaign against the unions' demands is well under way, with all the big names of public and private capital involved), and, when it comes to the crunch, outright repression of 'unlawful' forms of struggle—will between them succeed in keeping down pay increases in the wages round due at the end of this year, as in 1966. A devaluation of the lira may also be used this time to restore price competitiveness.

But even in the short term things may turn out quite differently. The 1963 credit squeeze and the subsequent depression induced very fast increases in productivity and a spectacular leap in exports. The present stagnation is not producing anything of the sort: productivity is increasing very slowly, if at all, and the growth of exports is quite low by Italian standards. Perhaps an expansion in world demand and a de-

valuation will change this pattern: but this remains to be seen. The unions of 1972 (despite the so far successful attempts to prevent their merger) and above all, the degree of consciousness, militancy and organization of the workers, are not the same as in 1968. A bit more unemployment and repression will not do.

From a long-term point of view, this handling of this crisis—mainly through induced stagnation—is going to jeopardize the remaining chances of a major new wave of capital accumulation. Efficient, imaginative and determined direction of the economy and of society seem necessary to getting any real process of capital accumulation under way again (assuming, of course, that international economic relations do not degenerate too rapidly). But then it must be recognized that the present situation is quite different from that of the fifties: that a repeat of the old Centre governments—even given all the internal and international prerequisites—simply cannot do the job, that the ‘easy years’ of surplus labour, and tolerated or induced inefficiency outside the export sector, are over, and that—short of outright repression—capitalist reforms are badly needed.

There are few possibilities, however, of a strong reformist government. What the communists are pressing for is a ‘democratic’ reformist government, based on a new social bloc which would include the ‘great popular forces’: communists, socialists and catholics. This would be a re-creation of the Centre Left, but with communist support as the determining factor. There is also the idea of an authoritarian reforming government, on neo-gaullist lines; and maybe some merger of the two types could provide other options. A detailed discussion of the different formulae would be highly speculative. What can, however, be said is that neither of the two main options seems very probable in the near future. The second is definitely implausible. The first has just been rejected by Christian Democracy, and it is difficult to see how it could be reconsidered. This is not to say that a new Centre Left government (with the socialists in and the liberals out) cannot be formed, even in the next few months. But one cannot see how it would really represent a new social bloc, and how it could fail to be marred by the same indecision and conflict that plagued previous variations of this formula.

... and for the Left

If this is true, then we can expect a period of slow economic growth, of internal contradictions within the bourgeoisie, and of latent and open social tensions. A lesser chance of success for a reformist policy does not unfortunately mean an automatically greater chance for a revolutionary policy. With the Communist Party bent on a rather improbable project for a ‘progressive’ Centre-Left government, and with the extreme left groups deeply divided and ineffective, it is not very easy to see how to exploit the emerging contradictions and tensions in a revolutionary way. What the revolutionary left badly needs is a convincing and widely shared strategical perspective; instead it is dragged along by the events. May 1968, the *contestazioni* and the ‘hot autumn’ have come and gone, and nobody can even agree why. These events have produced the usual political cycle on the extreme left: enthusiasm

and a predominance of spontaneist groups and tactics during the heyday of the movement; and during the downswing, depression and a stress on group discipline and theoretical work, with the 'Leninist' groups predominant. But the political situation is moving fast. The changes brought about by the events of 1968-71 in the degree of consciousness and organization of the workers and students—and many other social groups—have no comparison in Europe, not even in France. Despite all the difficulties, the objective obstacles and subjective inadequacies, it is certainly one of the most challenging situations in Europe for the revolutionary left.

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Introduction to Korsch

Interest in the theoretical work of Karl Korsch has grown as part of the wider expansion of interest in Marxist theory that has occurred in the past decade. Often assimilated to Lukács, with whom he has definite theoretical affinities, Korsch in many important ways differs from the Hungarian theorist. The most profound difference is the divergent political choice that the two made in the mid-1920s: Lukács remained in general loyal to the Comintern while Korsch broke with the Communist Party. This difference has also affected the later 'rediscovery' of these two theorists' writings. Lukács continued to write and act as a prominent if controversial member of the Hungarian Party and expressed himself on a variety of theoretical and political issues until his death in 1971. Korsch's later theoretical and political positions are less available and less direct and it is often hard to chart the course that his thinking took, especially after his emigration to the USA in 1936. This relative obscurity of his later work and his death in 1961 before the revived interest in Korsch have also meant that the intellectual and biographical background to his earlier work has been little explored.

The interview that we publish here with Dr Hedda Korsch illuminates the personal background to Korsch's political and theoretical career, vividly evoking the German cultural context from which he came. She and Korsch were married before the First World War and joined the KPD in 1920. During the Weimar Republic she worked as a teacher in experimental schools and was employed in the Soviet Trade Mission in Berlin until the KPD leaders had her dismissed because of her relationship to Korsch. In the late 1920s and early 1930s she taught in the Karl-Marx-Schule in Berlin and left Germany in 1933 after the Nazi seizure of power. She now lives at Fort Lee, New Jersey, where the following interview was recorded in September 1972.

Memories of Karl Korsch

Karl Korsch was born in 1886 in Todstedt near Hamburg. What was his family background?

Korsch came from a medium middle-class background. His father had been through secondary school, had taken the *Abitur*, and possessed great intellectual ambition. He was very interested in philosophy and wrote an enormous unpublished volume on the development of Leibnitz's theories of monads. He tried to put the whole of the cosmos into this philosophical system. It was his life's work and purely theoretical. The family came from East Prussia, from a farming background. But he wanted something more urban and intellectual. Soon after he married Teresa Raikovsky, Korsch's mother, they moved west to Todstedt. The father wanted to be closer to western culture, and he disliked the agricultural Junker environment in which they lived. Because although the Korsch family themselves had only a modest-sized farm, the big estates were all around them and his father had no interest in agriculture. His mother was

totally unconcerned with intellectual matters and never read a thing. She was pretty and extremely temperamental: she cooked well when she was in a good humour, burnt everything when she was angry. She was terribly untidy and if there is one reason why Karl was so tidy it was because of his mother. For example, during his last years at school he had a shed at the bottom of the garden where he worked. It was like a monk's cell with no rug on the floor, just a table and a few hard chairs, and he told me that was the style of life he liked. All his pencils lay absolutely straight along the desk. This taste of his for complete order and clarity was greatly furthered by his mother's lack of it.

The first 11 years in that small town on the Lüneburg Heath had a very strong influence on Karl. He could speak the dialect of North Germany and until the First World War he pronounced certain syllables such as the 's' at the beginning of *sprechen* and *staben* in a North German way. He got rid of these during the War because all the people in his regiment were from Meiningen and they could not understand what he was saying; in order to be understood by ordinary people—the soldiers—he changed his accent. But he was always full of stories, proverbs and expressions from that part of the world.

When he was 11 the family moved because there was no Gymnasium, no secondary school, and Karl showed such abilities that his parents thought he should have a better school. Meiningen was at that time still a Grand-Duchy and I do not know why they chose it. It may have been because it was one of the most liberal and enlightened principalities; in contrast to Prussia which was much more reactionary, Meiningen had carried out a number of reforms. It possessed a Hoftheater which was the first theatre in Germany to play realistically and not recite the classical roles in an oratorical fashion. When they moved there, Korsch's father was employed by a bank; in the end he rose to be vice-president of it in Meiningen. The Korsch family lived in Obermassfeld, a village nearby, and Karl used to walk an hour each way when going to school. Some people have suggested that the Korsch family were quite affluent, but although they were not poor there were six children (four daughters, two sons) and life was certainly extremely simple. They lived in this village because rents were cheaper than in town and they led a very parsimonious existence.

Korsch remained at school in Meiningen till he got his *Abitur*; most of his teachers were alcoholics, having acquired the habit of excessive drinking as students. He began to read philosophy by himself, in addition to the prescribed texts such as Schiller's theoretical essays which were included in the German literature course. Karl's father was working on his theory of monads and so he too encouraged Korsch to read philosophy. He told me later that it was at school that he shed all the idiocies of the typical German students of the time—endless drinking, corporate ceremonies, more beer and more Sunday excursions to the village pub. He said later that he got these out of his system in his last two years at school and never had the slightest inclination to repeat them again.

He then went to university but studied at a number of different institutions. What kinds of activity did he engage in when a student?

After taking his *Abitur* he first went to the university at Jena, where he completed his studies. He also spent one term in Munich because he thought that he should know something about art and Munich was the place to see paintings and listen to good music. After that he spent some time in Switzerland; there he learnt to speak French fluently. He also got a very strong taste of the international community there among students and political exiles. He met a lot of Russians who had fled from Tsarism although no famous ones.

He studied law because his father thought it was the only thing for an intelligent young man to study, and from the start he specialized in international law and jurisprudence. He passed all his exams well. He was also a member of the *Freie Studentenschaft*, a group of students opposed to the existing student *Bünde*. Korsch played a leading role in this movement and he travelled all over Germany working for it—which is how I first met him. There was no formal membership. Historically, it emerged in opposition to the *Burschenschaften* and the *Studentenkorps* which represented reactionary anti-semitism and militarism, with a lot of rituals with ranks and drinking, and membership lists. The *Freie Studenten* had no lists; they had open groups—sports groups, philosophy groups, mutual help groups. Anyone who wanted could attend. They came into existence around 1900 and they were in outspoken opposition to traditional German codes of behavior. I do not think that they had any more specific political content, except that they aspired towards an individualistic freedom. They had a slight tendency towards the left of centre, but they were certainly not socialist.

You mentioned his philosophical interests at school: how did these relate to the political positions he later adopted?

Although his father was a Leibnitzian he considered himself at this time to be a Kantian. He often gave talks on a variety of subjects and you could always see he was a Kantian. He insisted that anyone whom he considered intelligent enough should read not only the *Critique of Pure Reason* but Kant's other works as well, especially the *Metaphysics of Morals*. He was also a convinced socialist by the time of his last year in school. He looked around to see if there were any socialists among his school-mates, but he did not find any. He read a lot: I do not know when he first read Marx but I am inclined to think it was at school, because when he was a student he was an outspoken socialist—by conviction, although not a member of any organization. He never joined the SPD, although he had friends in the SPD especially in Jena. He wanted the *Freie Studenten* to meet workers and socialists and he arranged discussion evenings through a friend of his, Heidemann, whose father was an SPD member of the local parliament in Mecklenburg. The evenings were arranged like a dinner where men and women sit next to each other—in this case workers and students sat alternately.

Jena was a small town dominated by the University and the Zeiss works. It was a cultural centre. Schiller had lived there. Goethe's Weimar was just around the corner and there was a sense of tradition. The Zeiss concern was run by Zeiss and Abbé who were by their own lights social reformers. Zeiss ran the technical optical side of the opera-

tion; Abbé organized the social side. From the beginning they had a highly developed system of profit-sharing and they wanted to turn the whole thing over to the workers—but the workers did not want it. The Zeiss works also paid half the costs of the university, while the state paid the other half: Zeiss built a *Volksbau* with meeting and theatre rooms. Half the population of Jena were workers and half were students; and people used to say that every night one half of the population lectured to the other. It was the only town in Germany where an experiment in labour relations of this type existed at that time; and although Korsch was not related to the Zeiss works, he was influenced by the atmosphere and used to go to meetings at the *Volksbau*. After the War he became extremely involved and was one of their political leaders.

He was also drawn into the Diederichs circle, in which nationalist unpolitical people formed a youth group. Diederichs had a publishing house in Jena and he produced the magazine *Die Tat*. He collected around him a great number of students with whom he celebrated traditional holidays, like the summer solstice, with bonfires and singing, and dancing in the streets, and men jumping over fires with their girl friends and so on. Most of the young people wore *Schabben*, medieval German coats without sleeves or collars; they were opposed to the uninteresting and confining male clothes of the 19th century. None of them ever has collars or cuffs; they were loose shirts open at the neck and photographs show the large cravat that Korsch used to wear. They dressed in colourful clothes, and Diederichs in a quite imaginative and cheerful way cultivated a mixture of old customs and revolt against bourgeois society. I do not think there was much sexual licence among these young people, but it was freer than the conventional behaviour of young men and women at that time.

After completing his studies at Jena, Korsch went to England where he stayed from 1912 to 1914. His early writings show he was interested in a variety of aspects of English life—the Fabians, Galsworthy, the suffragettes, the universities. What was he doing in England?

It is not true, as some people have written, that he was studying in England. He had a job that involved his working with Sir Ernest Shuster a professor of law. Shuster, Stephen Spender's grandfather, had written a book on English civil law and procedure and he wanted someone not only to translate it but to edit it so that it was comprehensible to a German student of law. He himself had studied at Jena and Korsch had been recommended to him by the University. Korsch and Shuster got on so well and spent so much time talking that the book proceeded very slowly and it was near completion only by the spring of 1914. I was with him in England: I had wangled a job from my professor transcribing a Middle English manuscript in the British Museum. We observed many aspects of English life at that time, and joined the Fabian Society—the first organization to which he belonged. We regularly attended meetings of the 'Fabian Nursery' for younger members, and used to give reports, especially on German questions.

By the time Korsch and Shuster had finally finished the manuscript it

was the summer of 1914 and Karl was summoned by his regiment in Meiningen. He was called to appear for extraordinary manoeuvres. He said to me that this meant war was imminent, because he had already completed the necessary manoeuvres. We discussed at length whether to return to Germany or not, because he had no desire to fight for the 'fatherland', but we decided to go because he said that he had even less of a desire to be imprisoned somewhere as an enemy alien without contact with any movement. He wanted to be with the masses, and they would be in the army.

How did he react to the experience of the war and to the more general political convulsions in Europe?

Korsch was in the same regiment in which he had been trained, and many of the officers were former school-mates from Meiningen. It was the 32nd Infantry Regiment and most of the men in it were country boys. When they left for the war there was no jubilation. The music and bouquets were officially provided; the bands had to play and ladies threw flowers. But the men were moody, sullen or weeping. Korsch's father and I saw him off at the station—his mother did not want to see it. They were sent into Belgium and Korsch always said that he thought it was a criminal breach of international law to march through a neutral country. He condemned it wholeheartedly and so in the second week of the war he was demoted from lieutenant to sergeant. But he made himself useful in Belgium because he used to exert pressure on the officers and men not to loot and requisition food. He became a kind of unofficial quartermaster, making the soldiers pay for eggs and chickens.

Because he was against the war he never carried a rifle or a sabre. He used to point out that it made no difference, since you were just as safe with or without a weapon: the point was that you were safe neither way. He personally was not going to kill people, but he considered it his mission to bring as many men from his unit home alive as he could. That was his war aim. He used to volunteer for patrols and was decorated several times—not for any particular action, just for surviving under all that fire. What we at home could never understand was why he was not courtmartialled, but he later said that there were two probable reasons for this. One was that he was useful—he went on patrols, wrote good reports, and gave the officers ideas about how to advance and retreat. The second reason was that everyone knew him from school; and they thought that Korsch had always been crazy, but was not a bad guy. If he had been in a strange regiment he would have been put before a military tribunal straight away. In 1917 there were strikes and unrest among the soldiers as casualties increased; he was repromoted and ended up as a captain. They used to call his company 'the red company' because they were all for a revolution and for ending the war by not fighting any more. Later, when soldiers' soviets were established, he was immediately elected; and because the authorities were afraid of them they were not demobbed until after many units, not till January 1919. The demobilization took place near Berlin, but because they were from Meiningen they had no contact with revolutionaries in Berlin and took no part in the Spartakist insurrection at that time. Korsch had been in despair for the last six months of the war.

One grenade had hit his company and the first platoon had been wiped out to the last man. Later he told me that he had fallen into paroxysms of crying and then had got drunk because it was more than he could take. Nearly all the people he had started out with in 1914 were dead and he was desperate because of the massacres. But when the 'November Revolution' came he revived and hoped that a better Germany could be built.

The period from the end of the war until his expulsion from the Communist Party in 1926 was the most politically active phase of his life. What did he do on his return from the war?

When he came back he entered the USPD, which I had joined earlier when I heard that they had sent delegates to Zimmerwald and were for ending the war. He attended the USPD conference in 1920 when the party split and the majority opted for fusion with the Communists. Korsch went with the majority although he had great reservations about the 21 points that the Comintern had laid down. But it was the same as when we discussed his going back to Germany from London: he did not want to be a member of a small sect, but thought he should be where the masses were and he believed that the German workers were going Communist. His main reservation about the 21 points concerned the centralized discipline from Moscow, the degree of dependence on the Russian Party that they implied. In everything—as he had been with the students—he was in favour of decentralization, and he was by now very much convinced by the principle of workers' soviets.

Although he went back to teaching in Jena immediately after the war and we lived in the building that housed the local KPD paper *Die Neue Zeitung*, he was also in Berlin for a time working on the Socialization Commission. The Commission was a bourgeois institution with social-democratic members. It was supposed to draw up practical plans for 'socializing' the German economy. The original 1919 government contained SPD and USPD members and they wanted to work out the organizational problems of a socialist economy and of the expected transition. Karl was not nearly as sceptical as so intelligent a person should have been. He was also an enthusiast and his writings on socialization reflected this for nearly a year. The Russian Revolution had a big influence on him and we all thought that it was the beginning of a new epoch.

From 1921 onwards he was working on his major text Marxism and Philosophy. Did he at that time co-operate with Lukács whose History and Class Consciousness appeared in the same year?

He did not know about Lukács when he was working on *Marxism and Philosophy*. He heard about him only after the publication of his own volume. He said to me that another book had just come out which in many ways contained ideas similar to his own. Later when Korsch gave courses of lectures in Marxism in the 1920s and right up until February 1933 Lukács used to take part and attended pretty regularly. There were always discussions afterwards in the Cafe Adler on the Alexanderplatz and Lukács was there very often. In 1930 Felix Weill organized a

Sommerakademie, what today would be called a workshop, when we all spent a week discussing and reading papers in a country pub in Thuringia. The fact that Lukács was in the Communist Party and Korsch had left it did not affect their relationship; they both considered themselves to be critical communists. In the new introduction to *Marxism and Philosophy* written in 1929 Korsch said that the points of agreement between himself and Lukács were fewer than he had originally thought. This referred to their differing positions on Russia. That disagreement, rather than any philosophical issue, was the main source of their divergences. Korsch also thought that Lukács still preserved more of his idealist philosophical background than he himself had done. But despite this they remained friendly until Lukács went to the USSR and then they just had no connection any more.

Korsch was a Minister in the United Front KPD-USPD government in Thuringia of 1923, which was crushed by the intervention of the Reichswehr. What was Korsch's role in this experience?

From 1920 to 1923 he was teaching law at Jena, work he pursued even when he became a deputy in the Thuringia *Landtag* or state parliament. He gave political lectures in many places and was active in KPD politics. In Thuringia, the great majority of the masses were either left social-democrats or communist, and in September 1923 a coalition government of these two parties was formed.

The KPD backed cadres with a formal education. So he became Minister of Justice and remained so for six months. He was sceptical about the possibility of a revolutionary insurrection, which the formation of the coalition government was supposed to prepare regionally, but remained active on the grounds that one should participate as long as there was any chance of success. His realistic view was that the Nazis would try to move into Thuringia after the defeat of Hitler's putsch in Munich and that even if a workers' revolution did not succeed in winning power, it would at least be able to prevent the Nazis from seizing the government by force. Korsch with his military experience was in charge of para-military preparations; but there was little they could do. A high-ranking Russian officer advised them; they drilled and went on long marches, and worked out which heights to occupy when the Nazis invaded.

The projected insurrection in Thuringia never took place because the *Reichswehr* invaded before the plans for it were ready. The federal government in Berlin announced that law and order had broken down in Thuringia, that mobs had taken over; in fact, of course, peaceful, everyday existence had not ceased and the soldiers who arrived were to be disconcerted because they couldn't see any disorder and no one attacked them. The members of the regional government had to go underground and the press, including the foreign papers, reported that they had fled to Holland and Denmark. In fact they went as far as Leipzig, one hour by slow train from Jena. Korsch was forced into clandestinity and I was arrested, but four months later there was an amnesty, after the Thuringian government had been dissolved.

In 1924 new elections took place under emergency regulations and the

Berlin regime made sure that no socialist or communist government was formed. Indeed Thuringia later acquired one of the first Nazi governments of any region in Germany which then banned Karl from lecturing at Jena university. But in 1924 he was re-elected to the *Landtag*, and was also elected to the *Reichstag*, so we moved to Berlin.

For a year he was editor of the party's theoretical journal and at the centre of KPD politics. But at the moment of his greatest influence within the party, he was already starting to challenge its dominant line. What was his reaction to the changes in the Comintern at that time?

He was growing increasingly concerned about developments in Russia and especially so after the death of Lenin. He had always had doubts, of course. But in Thuringia the KPD was strong and large, and the local comrades were very good people, willing to sacrifice personal comfort, money, time, jobs, for the class struggle. There were lots of meetings and commissions and all that. Then directives began to come more and more from Moscow, saying what was to be discussed at meetings and what resolutions were to be put to them. Whereas during the early 1920s, the rank-and-file felt that they themselves forged their actions, the international leadership now began to interfere and direct everything. But Karl still thought that the KPD was the only party that still tried to *fight* in any way. There was no question of the Social-Democrats doing that. So he stayed in the party although he realized quite early on that he would be expelled. He went to the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1924 and there he had a feeling that he was in danger. Some comrades warned him that he might be intercepted because he was under strong suspicion for deviations and seditious talk against the Soviet leadership. He left before he was scheduled to depart and formed no real impressions of the Soviet Union while he was there; he was completely wrapped up in the conference itself.

He had contacts with other opposition groups. He met Amadeo Bordiga, the Italian leader in Moscow. Then he met Sapronov, of the Russian Workers' Opposition, when the latter came to Berlin on what was probably a clandestine trip some time after 1925. They talked a lot and understood each other very well and agreed to co-operate in opposition work. Sapronov and Korsch thought that by proposing measures and motions for greater decentralization and liberties for various groups they could do something worthwhile. They stupidly agreed on a code in which they would correspond with each other, and this code contributed to Sapronov's destruction when it was later found out in Russia. To get a coded letter from Germany was a dangerous thing, and it was not a difficult correspondence to decode because Karl taught me how to do it. So far as I know he had no contact with Trotsky. He thought Trotsky was right about many things and he was in favour of the idea of permanent revolution; but he thought that Trotsky too would have played a power game with alliances in a nationalist way, of which Korsch disapproved. Trotsky also wrote and said things which clearly show that he had a different way of approaching the class struggle: Trotsky laid less emphasis than Korsch on the need for consciousness among workers and laid more emphasis on the question of party leadership.

In 1925 he was dismissed from the editorship of Die Internationale and in 1926 was expelled from the KPD: What were his subsequent political activities, prior to the Nazi seizure of power? What was the character of his relationship with Brecht?

When he was expelled from the KPD he produced the magazine *Kommunistische Politik* for two years, paying for it out of his salary as a Reichstag deputy, while we lived off his salary from Jena and my earnings from teaching. The magazine was in a newspaper format and was nearly self-supporting. In that whole period up to 1933, Korsch developed his understanding of several key subjects and continued to lecture on Marxism. He studied geopolitics, world history, and mathematics. He worked very thoroughly through modern mathematical thought with a Professor at Berlin university who later died at the hands of the Nazis. He was a member of the *Gesellschaft für empirische Philosophie*. He also went deeply into the problems of what today would be called the Third World. He studied the development of the various colonial countries because he thought that the liberation of the colonies was perhaps imminent and could change world politics completely. In that period we were closely involved with the whole group around the Malik Verlag, including Felix Weill, the son of a millionaire who had endowed the Verlag as well as the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. He was an important friend, who gave us the down payment on our house. One day in August 1928 he invited us to see the première of the Threepenny Opera and we went together; afterwards we went to see Brecht with some of these other leftist artists. George Grosz was also there that night and we were all very excited: it seemed to us really new and worthwhile. From then on Korsch and Brecht met quite a bit and when Karl gave a course of lectures in Berlin, Brecht used to attend. But he and Brecht soon found this inadequate and began to meet at specially arranged gatherings to which each of them would bring four or five comrades. They continued to meet until things were too unsafe for 10 or 12 people to assemble together.

Korsch's lectures were given at the Karl-Marx-Schule, a school at which I taught. It was a very radical experimental school, which comprised everything from Kindergarten through the training of high school teachers to Ph.Ds. We said that it took students 'from the cradle to the grave'. It was most exciting. The principal was a social democrat and there were a number of older teachers who tried to sabotage the whole thing. But there were a lot of communists among the parents because the school was in Neukölln, a proletarian suburb of Berlin. There were four streams, and three of them started at the normal high school age of 10. One was for humanistic studies and ancient languages; one for mathematics and science; one for humanistic studies with a stress on philosophy, literature and history. The fourth was for gifted children. We could not all at once revolutionize the German educational system, but we were able to take children out of the public school at the age of 13-14 and take them through to the *Abitur* level. The school was called the Karl-Marx-Schule not because the teachers or the school-children had decided so, but because it was a completely KPD municipality. We used to give rooms to outsiders to lecture provided they

lectured in the spirit of Karl Marx, and that is where Karl used to speak.

I remember the last lecture he gave, on the night of 28 February 1933. We were all in the café afterwards when the news came that the Reichstag was burning. Quite a few of the participants did not go home that night. Others went home and were arrested. The law on political reliability of civil servants was passed in April, and Korsch and I were thereby deprived of our salaries. I was dismissed on 1 May and our bank account was confiscated. So we were without a penny and I went to Sweden to work. At first he remained in Berlin, not sleeping at home and trying to organise underground anti-Hitler activities. So many people still thought that it could not last and in the spring he and a former student of mine organized quite a large meeting in a forest outside Berlin attended by representatives of very different groups including Christians, trades unions, Communists, Social Democrats, and other scattered groups like the *Gesellschaft für Ästhetische Kultur*. They held a large conference, one of the largest that was ever organized without detection under Hitler. They tried to evolve ways of fighting from within Germany, but most of them were soon caught and imprisoned or killed. Korsch was not caught and he remained until late autumn of 1933 when it became impossible to sleep even in the sheds of workers' allotments. He was by then a liability on his friends. Brecht had invited him to Denmark, so he went and stayed with him.

He lived in the USA from 1936 until his death in 1961, although after the war he visited Europe. His writings appear to take on a more pessimistic tone in this later period and at times seem to abandon Marxism altogether. What were his political and theoretical activities in these years?

He went to Denmark first, and then to England where he still had contacts. Shuster was dead, but his wife was still alive; and he knew quite a few young English people like Spender and Isherwood who had come to Germany during the Weimar Republic because it seemed a focus of liberty and experimentation and who had visited us in Berlin. Karl tried to find work in England but it was extremely difficult because the local communists kept denouncing him to the Home Office. They said that he was a suspicious character who was probably a Nazi agent because since he was not a Jew, he had no reason to behave strangely and leave Germany in the way he had. One positive result of his stay in England was that he was asked to write his book on Karl Marx, which was commissioned by the London School of Economics. He did not think of his *Karl Marx* as a development of Marxist research or as a political action on his part; but he gave his own interpretation of Marx's thought and he wrote it as a textbook and an honest work.

In 1936 he went to America, and when he first arrived he kept an open mind about possible developments here. But that did not last long because he soon saw the direction in which things were going. On the other hand he saw that the forces moving within US capitalism were so different and so strong that one could not predict their direction with great exactitude. Upheavals *might* happen here, he thought, but the situation was so bad that the only way in which things would change

would be for them to get worse. He did not engage in any major political activity in the US, although he was occasionally invited to lecture to small political groups and used to speak at military schools during the war. His chief activity in the USA was writing.

In his last years he ~~was~~ pessimistic about the fate of the world revolutionary movement and completely so about the Soviet Union. He had no hope, even after the death of Stalin. He did not live long enough in good health (i.e. up to 1957) to form much of an opinion about the Chinese revolution, although he was very interested in what was happening in China and had been an old foe of Chiang Kai-shek long ago in Germany. On his last trip to Europe he visited Yugoslavia and was favourably impressed; but he thought the country was extremely primitive and wondered how far it could go and how it might change in the process. His main hope lay with the colonial nations—he thought they would become more and more important and Europe would become less so.

His 1950 lecture, entitled *10 Theses on Marxism*, is easy to misunderstand and is not a rejection of Marxism. The *Theses* were not meant for publication although I later allowed them to be printed. The centre of his interest to the very end was Marxism. But he tried to adapt Marxism as he understood it to new developments, particularly in two ways. One was, as I have mentioned, by studies of the colonial world: he thought that early Marxism had for good reason been concentrated on Europe, but that one now had to look further and this concern tied into his interest in the world historians. In his 1946 article on the Philippines he saw pretty clearly the nature of nominal colonial independence. His other major concern at this time was the widening of Marxism to cope with the advances of other sciences. He thought that as capitalist society had developed since Marx's time, Marxism too should be developed to understand it. His uncompleted text, the 'Manuscript of Abolitions', is an attempt to develop a Marxist theory of historical development in terms of the future abolition of the divisions that constitute our society—such as the divisions between different classes, between town and country, between mental and physical labour.

Interviewer: FH

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Marx's Theory of Productive and Unproductive Labour

This essay will attempt, first and foremost, a definitive exposition of Marx's theory of productive and unproductive labour.¹ This theory is presented in the three volumes of *Capital* and in *Theories of Surplus Value*—Marx's projected historico-critical fourth volume.² This seems useful and necessary for several reasons. First, as one of the most suspect legacies of classical political economy, its importance in Marxist political economy is disputed.³ As a result, it has not been accorded a central place in most expositions of Marx's political economy, and its relation to the fundamental concept of surplus value has not been sufficiently emphasized.⁴ To anticipate, if the essential problem for Marx in his mature economic writings was the explanation of surplus value under capitalism, then, on any count, the distinction between productive labour which creates surplus value, and unproductive labour much of which is supported out of surplus value—this distinction is a critical one. Its analysis is the more urgent since several Marxist writers, notably Baran,⁵ have recently reinterpreted the concept in the course of focusing on the disposal and absorption of the surplus under

monopoly capitalism. Lastly, there has been a recent growth of awareness that the concepts of productive and unproductive labour may have political implications, by influencing our interpretation of the class structure of present-day monopoly capitalism.⁶

With these requirements in mind, this paper is divided into three parts (or rather two and a half, since the third is relatively brief and inadequate). First, there is an attempt to spell out precisely what Marx meant by the terms productive labour and unproductive labour, by summarizing and reproducing where necessary, his writings on the subject. In so doing, I shall follow Marx's own order of analysis by beginning with the basic concepts of *Capital* volume I, as developed and expanded in the first volume of *Theories of Surplus Value*, and by then proceeding with their modification to take account of commercial labour in volumes II and III. In the second part, the concept of productive and unproductive labour is situated in its context, by relating it to the central propositions of Marx's political economy. The questions and ambiguities which this raises are then analysed, by comparing the role and status of the concept for Marx with Adam Smith and classical political economy on the one hand, and with more recent Marxist writers on the other. Lastly, there is a very brief consideration of the political implications of the theory of productive and unproductive labour.

I Marx's Concept

1. Labour productive of Use Value

'Only bourgeois narrow-mindedness, which regards the capitalist forms of production as absolute forms—hence as eternal, natural forms of production—can confuse the question of what is productive labour from the standpoint of capital with the question of what labour is productive in general, or what is productive labour in general; and consequently fancy itself very wise in giving the answer that all

¹ This essay originated in a Manchester study group which for two years systematically read and discussed the three volumes of Marx's *Capital*.

² To avoid unnecessary footnotes, references to these volumes are placed immediately after any quotation. References to *Capital* give first the volume, second the chapter and third the page numbers in the Moscow editions of 1961 (vol. I), 1967 (vol. II) and 1966 (vol. III). Treating *Theories of Surplus Value* as the fourth projected volume of *Capital*, I refer to the three parts as IV/1, IV/2 and IV/3, followed by the page numbers in the Moscow editions of 1969 (part 1), 1968 (part 2) and 1972 (part 3).

³ Compare for instance Joan Robinson's view of the status of the concept with Baran's: J. Robinson, *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, 2nd ed., London 1966, pp. 20-1. P. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, London 1957, Ch. 2.

⁴ The best, though brief, expositions are found in P. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, London 1962 and B. Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, 2 vols., London, 1968. See S. H. Coontz, *Productive Labour and Effective Demand*, London 1965, for an extended discussion.

⁵ P. Baran, *op. cit.* See also J. Gillman, *The Falling Rate of Profit* (London, 1957); the stimulating debate between J. Morris and J. Blake in *Science and Society*, vol. 22, 1958 and vol. 24, 1960; and J. Gillman, *Prosperity in Crisis* New York 1965. These alternative interpretations are discussed in part II.

⁶ See M. Nicolaus, 'Proletariat and Middle Class in Marx', *Studies on the Left*, VII, 1, Jan.-Feb., 1967.

labour which produces anything at all, which has any kind of result, is by that very fact productive labour.' (IV/1, 393).

For Marx, the concept of productive labour was an historically specific concept, and for this very reason it was necessary to distinguish at the outset productive labour under capitalism from 'productive labour in general'.⁷ We begin, therefore, with his analysis of the latter, which Marx in volume I, chapter 1 of *Capital* calls *useful* labour. This—the production of use values through the labour process—is a necessary condition of human existence:

'In the use value of each commodity there is contained useful labour, i.e.: productive activity of a definite kind and exercised with a definite aim . . . so far therefore as labour is a creator of use value, is useful labour, it is a necessary condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal nature—imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchanges between man and Nature, and therefore no life.' (I, 1, 42–3).

This necessary condition holds, therefore, for all commodity production and for all capitalist production:

'In order that his labour may reappear in a commodity, he must, therefore, before all things, expend it on something useful, on something capable of satisfying a want of some sort. Hence, what the capitalist sets the labourer to produce, is a particular use-value, a specified article. The fact that the production of use-values, or goods, is carried on under the control of a capitalist and on his behalf, does not alter the general character of that production.' (I, 7, 177).

However, a few pages later in this chapter on the labour-process, Marx terms this general attitude of all human labour, *productive* labour:

'In the labour-process, therefore, man's activity, with the help of the instruments of labour, effects an alteration, designed from the start, in the material worked upon. The process disappears in the product; the latter is a use-value, Nature's material adapted by a change of form to the wants of man . . . If we examine the whole process from the point of view of its result, the product, it is plain that . . . the labour itself is productive labour.' (I, 7, 181).

A footnote to the above continues:

'This method of determining, from the standpoint of the labour-process alone, what is productive labour, is by no means directly applicable to the case of the capitalist mode of production.'

It seems clear that the labour viewed from the standpoint of the labour-process alone is *useful* labour, as Marx has used the term up to that point. To help distinguish this from productive labour under capitalism, we shall continue to denote all labour productive of use-values 'useful labour'.

⁷ It is precisely because the historical specificity of concepts is central to Marx's political economy, that he utilises abstractions referring to phenomena common to all societies, such as 'the labour process' and 'production in general'. cf. 'Production in general is an abstraction, but it is a rational abstraction,' Introduction to A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy, Marx's *Grundrisse*, London 1971 p. 18.

This distinction also aids the interpretation of the following well-known passage in volume I:

'As the co-operative character of the labour-process becomes more and more marked, so, as a necessary consequence, does our notion of productive labour, and of its agent the productive labourer, become extended. In order to labour productively, it is no longer necessary for you to do manual work yourself; enough if you are an organ of the collective labourer, and perform one of its subordinate functions. The first definition of productive labourer . . . still remains correct for the collective labourer, considered as a whole. But it no longer holds good for each member taken individually.' (I, 16, 508-9).

With spreading division of labour, it is increasingly rare for a single person to produce unaided a use-value. Hence he cannot be called a *useful* labourer as first defined. Nevertheless the collectivity of individuals does produce a use-value and does therefore labour usefully. The necessity for reinterpreting this passage in terms of useful labour will, I hope, emerge later on. Similarly, the important question of what constitutes a use-value is left to one side for the time being.

2. Labour productive of Surplus-value

Productive labour specific to the capitalist mode of production is labour which produces surplus-value. This definition is presented in volume I of *Capital*:

'That labourer alone is productive, who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, and who thus works for the self-expansion of capital . . . Hence the notion of a productive labourer implies not merely a relation between work and useful effect, between labourer and product of labour, but also a specific, social relation of product, a relation that has sprung up historically and stamps the labourer as the direct means of creating surplus-value.' (I, 16, 509).

Marx then says no more on the subject in volume I but refers us to 'Book IV, which treats of the history of the theory'. In part 1 of *Theories of Surplus Value* a long chapter considers Adam Smith's views on productive and unproductive labour, and those of his followers. One must be careful in interpreting these passages, since Marx follows his usual policy here of simultaneously recounting and criticizing the views of other economists. But we are left in no doubt of his views on productive and unproductive labour, since he sets them out clearly in a separate addendum to part 1. It is this text that we shall use as our guideline and main source of information in this and the following three sections.

In a dozen and more places, Marx repeats this fundamental property of productive labour:

'Only labour which is directly transformed into capital is productive.' (IV/1, 393).

'From the capitalist standpoint only that labour is productive which creates a surplus-value.' (IV/1, 153).

'Productive labour, in its meaning for capitalist production, is wage-labour which, exchanged against the variable part of

capital . . . reproduces not only this part of capital (or the value of its own labour-power), but in addition produces surplus-value for the capitalist.' (IV/1, 152).

This must not be confused with the simple purchase of labour services with money, which, we shall see, is precisely what characterises *unproductive* labour.⁸ Marx emphasizes that 'productive labour in the first sense'—what we have called 'useful' labour—is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for productive labour in this second, correct sense.

'Labour which is to produce *commodities* must be useful labour; it must produce a *use-value* . . . And consequently only labour which manifests itself in *commodities*, that is in use-values, is labour for which capital is exchanged. But it is not this concrete character of labour, its use-value as such . . . which forms its specific use-value for capital and consequently stamps it as *productive labour* in the system of capitalist production.' (IV/1, 400).

If productive labour is labour exchanged with capital to produce surplus-value, unproductive labour is labour exchanged with revenue:

'This also establishes absolutely what unproductive labour is. It is labour which is not exchanged with capital, but directly with revenue, that is wages or profits (including of course the various categories of those who share as co-partners in the capitalist profit, such as interest and rent).' (IV/1, 157).

Here Marx is clearly referring to the Ricardian gross revenue, or what we would call income. In other words wage-labourers can purchase unproductive labour no less than capitalists and those with whom they share surplus-value:

'The labourer himself can buy labour, that is commodities which are provided in the form of services . . . As buyer—that is a representative of money confronting commodity—the labourer is in absolutely the same category as the capitalist where the latter appears only as a buyer . . .' (IV/1, 404).

The capitalist *qua* capitalist purchases *labour-power* with which to create surplus-value. The capitalist (or worker for that matter) *qua* consumer purchases *labour services* for the direct use-value they provide. The former labour is productive, the latter unproductive. Included in the latter are all state employees, whose services are purchased with revenue whether the original taxes are paid out of wages or out of the various categories of surplus-value.⁹

Marx stresses the importance of this distinction between productive and unproductive labour in the following passage:

'Productive labour is only a concise term for the whole

⁸ The transformation or exchange of labour with *capital* consists of 'two essentially different though interdependent phases' (IV/1, 397). First, labour power is bought with money, and second, it is consumed, the labour power is set to work to produce surplus value:

'Labour is directly *materialized*, is transformed *directly* into capital, after it has been *formally* incorporated in capital through the first transaction. . . The statement that *productive labour* is labour which is *directly* exchanged with capital embraces all these phases.' (IV/1, 398–399).

⁹ See IV/1, 84.

relationship and the form and manner in which labour power figures in the capitalist production process. The distinction from *other* kinds of labour is however of the greatest importance, since this distinction expresses precisely the specific form of the labour on which the whole capitalist mode of production and capital itself is based . . . ' (IV/1, 396).

Productive labour is the *sine qua non* of capitalism, a category which expresses the 'form and manner in which labour power figures in the capitalist production process'.

3. Labour productive of Material Goods

The bulk of chapter 4 of part 1 of *Theories of Surplus Value* is concerned to demonstrate, first, that Adam Smith correctly defined productive labour in the way we have just considered, and second, that he confused this with another, incorrect distinction. This second definition of Adam Smith's, and Marx's comments on it, are considered in this section. Smith also saw productive labour as that which 'fixes and realizes itself in some particular subject or vendible commodity, which lasts for some time at least after labour is past,' whilst services are unproductive labour because they 'generally perish in the very instant of their performance, and seldom leave any trace or value behind them'.¹⁰ Thus this second distinction was based on the *material characteristics of the product*, rather than on the social relations embodied in the labour. This concept was the source of great confusion among economists following Smith, and Marx vehemently rejected it on every occasion, including the passage in *Capital*, volume I:

'If we may take an example from outside the sphere of production of material objects, a schoolmaster is a productive labourer, when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietors. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, does not alter the relation.' (I, 16, 309).

More specifically:

'It follows from what has been said that the designation of labour as *productive labour* has absolutely nothing to do with the *determinate content* of that labour, its special utility, or the particular use-value in which it manifests itself. *The same* kind of labour may be *productive* or *unproductive*.' (IV/1, 401).

'An actor for example, or even a clown, according to this definition, is a productive labourer if he works in the service of a capitalist (an entrepreneur) to whom he returns more labour than he receives from him in the form of wages; while a jobbing tailor who comes to the capitalist's house and patches his trousers for him, is an unproductive labourer. The former's labour is exchanged with capital, the latter's with revenue.' (IV/1, 157).

There are several other passages just as explicit, but Marx does note that *in practice*, at the time Smith and he were writing there was a large

¹⁰ A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, London 1970, p. 430.

overlap between the two concepts. As the capitalist mode of production spreads, it gradually conquers the field of material production, but impinges very little on non-material production. Thus labourers producing material goods were often productive labourers employed by capitalists, and labourers providing services were often paid for out of revenue, were unproductive labourers. But the conceptual distinction is in no way obscured by this fact:

'In considering the essential relations of capitalist production it can therefore be assumed that the entire world of commodities, all spheres of material production, are (formally or really) subordinated to the capitalist mode of production (for this is happening more and more completely . . .) . . . It can then be said to be a characteristic of *productive labourers*, that is, labourers producing capital, that their labour realizes itself in *commodities*, in material wealth.¹¹ And so *productive labour*, along with its determining characteristic—which takes no account whatever of the *content of labour* and is entirely independent of that content—would be given a second, different and subsidiary definition.' (IV/1, 409–10).

In the case of services proper,

'here the capitalist mode of production is met with to only a small extent, and from the nature of the case can only be applied in a few spheres . . . All these manifestations of capitalist production in this sphere are so insignificant compared with the totality of production that they can be left entirely out of account.' (IV/1, 410–11).

Though Marx has in mind here 'artists, orators, actors, teachers, physicians, priests, etc', many of whom are now employed by the State—thus are supported out of revenue and unproductive on this count, nevertheless the growth of services supplied by capitalist enterprises must qualify this observation today.

4. The labour of Handicraftsmen and Peasants

Marx's brief observations here are relevant to the labour of all self-employed persons in capitalist societies, though he considers only those producing a material commodity for sale—not a service. He criticizes contemporary analyses of the peasant which regarded him as simultaneously capitalist and wage-labour, setting himself to work with his own capital.

¹¹ Sic. One reason why a reader can still leave Marx with the impression that productive labour is identified with labour producing material goods, is in his use of the term 'commodity' to mean a material good, rather than *any* use-value produced by human labour for exchange. However, in the following passage, Marx clarifies this usage and answers his critics:

'The materialization, etc, of labour is, however, not to be taken in such a Scottish sense as Adam Smith conceives it. When we speak of the commodity as a materialization of labour—in the sense of its exchange-value—this itself is only an imaginary, that is to say, a purely social mode of existence of the commodity which has nothing to do with its corporeal reality; it is conceived as a definite quantity of social labour or of money. It may be that the concrete labour whose result it is leaves no trace in it.' (IV/1, 171)

We consider in Part II an alternative reason why Adam Smith maintained that productive labour necessarily produced material goods, which suggests that this was intentional and not necessarily due to any 'confusion' on his part.

'The means of production become capital only in so far as they have become separated from labourer and confront labour as an independent power. But in the case referred to the producer—the labourer—is the possessor, the owner, of his means of production. They are therefore not capital, any more than in relation to them he is a wage labourer.' (IV/1, 408).

Independent handicraftsmen and peasants are not therefore productive labourers. But neither are they unproductive whose labour is exchanged directly for revenue:

'They confront me as sellers of commodities, not as sellers of labour, and this relation therefore has nothing to do with the exchange of capital for labour, therefore also has nothing to do with the distinction between *productive* and *unproductive labour*, which depends entirely on whether the labour is exchanged for money as money or for money as capital. They therefore belong neither to the category of *productive* or *unproductive* labourers, although they are producers of commodities. But their production does not fall under the capitalist mode of production.' (IV/1, 407).

In other words labour outside the capitalist mode of production cannot be analysed in terms of Marx's distinction between productive and unproductive labour—there is a third category of labour which is neither. This is consistent with his aims of analysing productive and unproductive labour from the standpoint of capitalist production.

5. Collective Labour

We consider further here Marx's observations on the 'collective labourer' and on 'fringe' groups in the productive process, such as transport workers. He remarks that the expanding division of labour under capitalist production, means that for many workers:

'the direct relation which their labour bears to the object produced naturally varies greatly. For example the unskilled labourers in a factory . . . have nothing directly to do with the working up of raw material. The workman who functions as overseer of those directly engaged in working up the raw material are one step further away; the works engineer has yet another relation and in the main works only with his brain, and so on.' (IV/1, 411).

Nevertheless, they are all productive labourers because (a) they *collectively* produce a use-value—they are all 'organs of the collective labourer', and (b) they are all *individually* wage-labourers who have exchanged their labour for capital.

'But *the totality of these labourers* . . . produce the result, which, considered as the *result* of the labour-process pure and simple, is expressed in a *commodity* or *material product*; and all together, as a workshop, they are the living production machine of these *products*—just as, taking the production process as a whole, they exchange their labour for capital. . . The relation of each one of these persons to capital (is) that of wage-labourer and in this pre-eminent sense (is) that of productive labourer. All these persons are not only *directly* engaged in the production of

material wealth, but they exchange their labour *directly* for money as capital.' (IV/1, 411-12).¹²

Of course in contemporary analysis, the problem is to decide how direct is 'directly'. But Marx throughout interprets this broadly:

'Included among these productive workers, of course, are those who contribute in one way or another to the production of the commodity, from the actual operative to the manager or engineer (as distinct from the capitalist).' (IV/1, 156-7).

This would suggest the inclusion nowadays of large numbers of scientists, technologists, technicians and engineers, plus substantial sections of management and white collar workers—which groups precisely will emerge in the next section.

The transport industry is regarded by Marx as the 'fourth sphere of material production', in addition to extractive industry, agriculture and manufacture. (IV/1, 412). Consequently,

'The relation of *productive labour*—that is, of the wage-labourer—to capital is here exactly the same as in the other spheres of material production.' (IV/1, 412).

The reasoning behind this is quite consistent: it is that transport alters the use-value of the commodity—and the labour is therefore useful labour:

'Quantities of products are not increased by transportation. Nor, with a few exceptions, is the possible alteration of their natural qualities brought about by transportation an intentional useful effect; it is rather an unavoidable evil. But the use-value of things is materialized only in their consumption, and their consumption may necessitate a change of location of these things, hence may require an additional process of production, in the transport industry.' (II, 6, 153).

'Its [the commodity's] spacial existence is altered, and along with this goes a change in its use-value, since the location of this use-value is changed.' (IV/1, 412).

On this basis:

'Its exchange-value increases in the same measure as this change in the use-value requires labour . . . although in this case the real labour has left no trace behind it in the use-value . . .' (IV/1, 412-13).

Marx's analysis of transport workers therefore both confirms the concept of productive labour that we have thus far arrived at (as the production of use-value and surplus-value), and helps us in interpreting the term 'use-value'.

6. Labour employed in the Circulation Process

On the last page of *Theories of Surplus Value* part 1, at the end of the important appendix that has so far guided us, Marx writes:

'Here we have been dealing only with *productive* capital, that is, capital employed in the *direct process of production*. We come later to capital in the *process of circulation*. And only after that,

¹² See the interesting passage in K. Marx, *Results* (Frankfurt, 1969) p. 66, quoted in E. Mandel, *The Leninist Theory of Organization*, London 1971, p. 23. Also J. Gillman, *The Falling Rate of Profit* op. cit., ch. 7.

in considering the special form assumed by capital as *merchant's capital*, can the question be answered as to how far the labourers employed by it are productive or unproductive.' (IV/1, 413).

We must therefore now turn to the relevant passages in *Capital*, volumes II and III, beginning with the treatment of 'pure' merchant's capital in volume III. This treats of commercial capital:

'... stripped of all heterogeneous functions, such as storing, expressing, transporting, distributing, retailing, which may be connected with it, and confined to its true function of buying in order to sell.' (III, 17, 282).

'We leave entirely out of consideration all possible processes of production which may continue in the process of circulation, and from which the merchant's business can be altogether separated; as, in fact, the actual transport industry and expressage may be, and are, industrial branches entirely distinct from commercial.' (III, 17, 288-9).

The remaining merchant's capital, devoted solely to buying and selling, and their associated functions, is capital functioning in the sphere of circulation, *hence creates no surplus-value*.

'The pure functions of capital in the sphere of circulation... the acts of selling and buying—produce neither value or surplus-value.' (III, 17, 281).

'Merchant's capital is simply capital functioning in the sphere of circulation. The process of circulation is a phase of the total process of reproduction. But no value is produced in the process of circulation, and, therefore, no surplus-value. Only changes of form of the same mass of value takes place. In fact, nothing occurs there outside the metamorphosis of commodities, and this has nothing to do as such either with the creation or change of values.' (III, 16, 279).

This analysis is in no way altered if these functions become the special concern of a separate group of merchant capitalists who themselves employ wage-labourers:

'If selling and buying commodities by industrial capitalists themselves are not operations which create value or surplus-value, they will certainly not create either of these when carried out by persons other than industrial capitalists.' (III, 17, 281).

The important conclusion, therefore, is that commercial workers are unproductive labourers, despite the characteristics they have in common with workers in the process of production—above all the fact that they are similarly exploited through having to supply unpaid labour (discussed below in part III). The previous definition of productive labour has been narrowed, from all labour exchanged with capital to all labour exchanged with *productive* capital; whereas the definition of unproductive labour has been expanded to include labour employed in the process of circulation.

But what precisely is the distinction between production and circulation or realization? This question is all the more important with the increasing penetration of the sales effort into the production process

under monopoly capitalism.¹³ The answer is provided elsewhere in volume III and in Marx's earlier analysis of the costs of circulation in *Capital* volume II. The critical distinction is between *those activities necessary to production in general, and those activities peculiar to commodity production*. That labour is unproductive which is historically specific to the commodity form, including capitalist production:

'If commercial capital and money-dealing capital do not differ from grain production any more than this differs from cattle-raising and manufacturing, it is plain as day that production and capitalist production are altogether identical . . .' (III, 20, 324).

It is the 'apologetic endeavours of the vulgar economist' that treats: 'commercial capital and money-dealing capital as forms arising necessarily from the process of production as such, whereas they are due to the specific form of the capitalist mode of production, which above all presupposes the circulation of commodities, and hence of money, as its basis.' (III, 20, 324).

This criterion is chiefly developed in Marx's analysis of the costs of storage in volume II, though at times the text is so unclear that the interpretation of certain passages will always be open to doubt. Nevertheless, the overall picture that emerges is of the necessity to distinguish among these costs, between those that arise because of the general nature of social production—the necessity to store and distribute goods—and those due solely to the commodity form:

'Whatever may be the social form of the products—supply, its preservation requires outlays for buildings, vessels etc. . . . also for means of production and labour, more or less of which must be expended, according to the nature of the product, in order to combat injurious influences . . . It may now be asked to what extent these costs enhance the value of commodities . . . Insofar as the formation of a supply entails a stagnation of circulation, the expense incurred thereby does not add to the value of the commodities . . . The costs are the same, but since they now arise *purely out of the form*, that is to say, out of the necessity of transforming the commodities into money . . . they do not enter into the values of the commodities but constitute deductions, losses of value in the realization of the value.' (II, 6, 147–51, my emphases).

Thus it is necessary to distinguish, within storage costs, between those arising purely out of the commodity-form, such as the involuntary pile-up of goods when circulation stagnates, and those necessary under any mode of production. Labour employed for the former reason does not add to value or surplus-value and is therefore unproductive. But when the 'commodity-supply is nothing but the commodity-form of the product-supply', when, that is, storage and distribution must necessarily be undertaken as part of the general productive process, then the labour involved adds to value and is productive. As with transport, storage, etc, does not improve the intrinsic quality of the use-value (except for a few exceptional goods), but it does *alter* it by preventing it from deteriorating:

¹³ Cf. P. Baran and P. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, London 1968 ch. 5.

'The use-value is neither raised nor increased here; on the contrary, it diminishes. But its diminution is restricted and it is preserved.' (II, 6, 142).

On this basis, the labour employed is useful labour, hence, if employed by a capitalist, is also productive. The same analysis could be applied to workers in distribution. Those who are really part of the productive process working in the sphere of supply (such as workers who unload goods, move them to the counters, etc) are productive labourers; those who operate the cash registers and are otherwise employed solely because the products assume a commodity form are, on Marx's criterion, unproductive labourers.

Marx uses the same approach to distinguish elsewhere between *supervisory* labour that is productive and unproductive, but here the criterion of unproductive labour is extended to include labour specific to all class societies based on exploitation:

'The labour of supervision and management is naturally required wherever the direct process of production assumes the form of a combined social process, and not of the isolated labour of independent producers. However, it has a double nature. On the one hand, all labour in which many individuals co-operate necessarily requires a commanding will to co-ordinate and unify the process . . . This is a productive job, which must be performed in every combined mode of production.' (III, 23, 383).

The remaining labour of management and supervision is unproductive:

'One part of the labour of superintendence merely arises from the antagonistic contradiction between capital and labour, from the antagonistic character of capitalist production, and belongs to the incidental expenses of production in the same way as nine-tenths of the "labour" occasioned by the circulation process.' (IV/3, 505. cf. IV/2, 355-6).

These passages clearly reveal the historical dimension which Marx has incorporated into the analysis of productive and unproductive labour. Mandel's conclusion provides a useful summary of the concept we have now discerned:

'In general, one can say that all labour which creates, modifies or conserves use-values or which is *technically indispensable* for realizing them is productive labour, that is, it increases their exchange-value. In this category belong not only the labour of industrial production properly so called, but also the labour of storing, handling and transport without which the use-values cannot be consumed.'¹⁴

7. Labour productive of 'unnecessary' Goods

At first sight, Marx appears to contradict his analyses reproduced in the previous section when he writes:

'The use-value of the commodity in which the labour of a

¹⁴ E. Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-2. I would substitute the term 'distributing' for 'realizing', to make clear that it is the physical modification of the use-value that is critical.

productive worker is embodied may be of the most futile kind.' (IV/1, 158).

Or, the opposite side of the same coin:

'Labour may be necessary without being productive.'¹⁵

Thus at no time, Marx argues, does the criterion of productiveness depend on any notion of the 'necessity' or 'social usefulness' of the actual content of the labour. When elaborating these statements he distinguishes different historical periods and the labour necessary to each of them. Thus some functions would appear to be 'necessary' in any society based on class contradictions. Referring to 'the great mass of so-called "higher-grade" workers—such as state officials, military people,' etc. Marx comments:

'The necessity for the inherited social combination of these classes, which in part (are) totally unproductive, (arises) from its own organization.' (IV/1, 174-5).¹⁶

Circulation workers are essential for the smooth functioning of commodity production, for instance the buying and selling agent is indirectly productive:

'He performs a necessary function, because the process of reproduction itself includes unproductive functions. He works as well as the next man, but intrinsically his labour creates neither value nor product.' (II, 6, 134).

'Merchant's capital . . . insofar as it contributes to shortening the time of circulation, may help indirectly to increase the surplus-value produced by the industrial capitalist.' (III, 16, 280).

Other unproductive labour, devoted to meeting human needs, would expand with the development of communism, for instance the employment of teachers and doctors.¹⁷ But nowhere is the necessity or intrinsic usefulness of the labour confused with productive labour. As Mandel puts it:

'When they produce dum-dum bullets, opium or pornographic novels, workers create new value, since these commodities, finding as they do buyers on the market, possess a use-value which enables them to realise their exchange-value. But from the standpoint of the general interests of human society, these workers have done work which is absolutely useless, or even harmful.'¹⁸

By contrast with Baran (see part 11 below), Marx rigorously eschews a historical perspective to determine the usefulness of the end-product of the labour, and thus the productiveness of the labour itself.

But does this not contradict the analysis of the previous section where, as we have shown, the historical necessity of a particular form of

¹⁵ K. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (Robertson), Berlin 1953, p. 432. Quoted in P. Baran, *op. cit.* p. 33. Though Marx treats of productive and unproductive labour in the *Grundrisse*, he does not add there to his fundamental analysis in *Theories of Surplus Value* and *Capital*.

¹⁶ See also IV/1, 288-9.

¹⁷ K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1949-50), vol. II.

¹⁸ E. Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

labour precisely determines whether or not it is productive? In theory the answer is no. One must distinguish the labour necessary to produce a final use-value, whether consumer goods, capital goods, arms or social services, from the labour employed in producing 'necessary' use-values. Marx's approach (the former) is concerned solely with the labour technically required to produce a given useful effect (at a given level of productivity) without questioning how the demand for this particular use-value has arisen. For Marx in this context, a use-value is anything which is demanded. Thus a historical perspective is adopted to distinguish that labour common to production in general from that generated solely as a result of the commodity-form, but this is *not* extended to question the nature of the goods produced themselves. A further discussion of this is postponed to the next section since we have here reached the end of our projected exposition of Marx's writings on productive and unproductive labour.

To conclude, productive labour is labour exchanged with capital to produce surplus-value. As a necessary condition it must be useful labour, must produce or modify a use-value—increasingly in a collective fashion; that is, it must be employed in the process of production. Labour in the process of pure circulation does not produce use-values, therefore cannot add to value or surplus-value. It does not add to the production of use-values because it arises specifically with commodity production out of the problems of realizing the value of commodities. Alongside this group of unproductive labourers are all workers supported directly out of revenue, whether retainers or state employees. This group differs from circulation workers, however, in that they do produce use-values—all public teachers, doctors, etc, would be included in this category today. The following diagram makes clear the two groups of unproductive workers.

	<i>Labour producing use-values</i>	<i>Labour not producing use-values</i>	
<i>Labour producing surplus-value</i>	Productive workers in industry, agriculture, distribution and services.	—	
<i>Labour not producing surplus-value</i>	Unproductive workers: all State employees, domestic servants, etc.	'Pure' circulation workers: salesmen, advertising workers, etc, and 'unnecessary' supervisory workers.	

II The Role of The Concept in Marxist Political Economy

From an exposition of the nature and content of Marx's concept of productive and unproductive labour, we now turn to a consideration of its role within the systems of Marxist and classical political economy

1. The Problem of Exploitation

For Marx, the central purpose of his mature economic writings was the

explanation of exploitation under capitalism utilizing the concept of surplus-value.¹⁹ Thus his concept of productive labour was developed to this end—it specified that labour which alone produced surplus-value under capitalism. Since, for Marx, the terms productive and unproductive labour are historical categories, ‘the value or validity of the concepts is determined by the specific problems of the epoch’.²⁰ With the rise of industrial capital this became the creation, rather than the worldwide redistribution, of the surplus, and moreover its creation in value form. Inseparably linked as it was to the labour theory of value, surplus-value was premised on the production of use-values in the labour process. Hence followed Marx’s elaboration of the concept in volumes II and III, and the distinction between the production and realization of value incorporated in his analysis of commercial workers. Joan Robinson wishes to disassociate Marx’s analysis of the historical necessity of certain groups of workers, which she regards as ‘important’, from his analysis of the production of value and surplus-value, which she regards as an ‘unnecessary puzzle’.²¹ But she can only suggest this because she rejects (or once rejected) the basis of the labour theory of value. It is this which forges the link between the quantities of social labour embodied in a commodity and its value, as well as between production of use-values—useful labour as the necessary basis to human society—and the production of surplus-value.²² Marx’s concept of productive and unproductive labour was shown above to be intimately linked to his basic theoretical categories: it cannot be thrown out without bringing these into question.

Nevertheless, it can be modified in various ways. There are three reasons why one may wish to consider alternative formulations of this or any concept in political economy. First, real conditions may have changed so much since the time Marx wrote that new problems have arisen, or phenomena which existed at that time may have changed qualitatively in importance, even though the mode of production remains capitalist. Three notable trends over the past century that have a bearing on the productive and unproductive labour debate are (a) the growth of state expenditures, some of which (such as health and education expenditure) are now important components of real wages, hence enter into the reproduction of variable capital; (b) the growth of commercial and distribution workers, include advertising and sales executives, financial advisors, etc; and (c) the growth of products designed to meet consumer needs which may be regarded as ‘unnecessary’ or ‘inessential’, having been either purposely created by capitalist enterprises and their sales organs, or shaped by more diffuse forces at work in capitalist society. Marx himself was well aware of the trends in capitalism, as he shows in the following prescient remarks:

‘What he (Ricardo) forgets to emphasize is the constantly growing number of the middle classes, those who stand between the workman on the one hand and the capitalist and the

¹⁹ cf. J. Blake, ‘Jacob Morris on Unproductive Employment: A Criticism’, in *Science and Society*, 24, 1960, p. 169.

²⁰ S. H. Coontz, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

²¹ J. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 20, n. 1.

²² cf. R. Meek, *Studies in the Labour Theory of Value* London 1958, chs. 1–3.

landlord on the other.' (IV/2, 573).

'New ramifications of more or less unproductive branches of labour are continually being formed and in these revenue is directly expended.' (IV/2, 560).

Second, and partly in response to a changing reality, the *object of analysis* of political economy may shift, so that theory is directed to answering different questions. From Marx's (successful) attempts to explain surplus-value under capitalism, attention among many Marxist economists today has focused on the *disposal* of this surplus under conditions of monopoly capital. This in turn leads to an analysis of *accumulation* and *growth* on the one hand, and to capitalist *waste* on the other.²³ Third, these two factors—changes in the economic and social reality, and shifts in the goal of economic theory—may in turn reveal ambiguities in Marx's original formulations which previously remained hidden. The principal ambiguity in Marx's theory of productive and unproductive labour emerged at the end of our exposition in part I. It is the use of a historical perspective to distinguish the labour necessary to produce a given use-value, whilst rigorously denying the use of such a perspective to determine the 'necessity' of the final 'use-value' itself. The productiveness of labour depends on the former, but not the latter, according to Marx. The three trends noted above have each put fresh strain on this tenuous distinction.

The growth of state *productive* enterprises—the nationalized industries—presents few problems. Where labour is exchanged with capital to produce goods or services for sale, and where the enterprises 'usually aim to make enough surplus-value to cover the going rate of interest on government obligations',²⁴ then the workers are productive just as in the private sector. As for remaining government activities, Marx is aware that these comprise both useful, historically necessary functions and functions arising from the class nature of capitalist society:

'Supervision and all-round interference by the government involves both the performance of common activities arising from the nature of all communities, and the specific functions arising from the antithesis between the government and the mass of the people.' (III, 23, 384).

But in this case the distinction has no implications for the productive *versus* unproductive labour debate since all labour employed by government (except in productive concerns) is exchanged with revenue, hence is unproductive.

This is not the case, however, if a second mode of distinguishing different government expenditures is adopted, i.e. that based on Marx's concept of *luxury goods* developed in his analysis of reproduction in *Capital* volume II. For Marx, luxuries are goods 'which enter into the consumption of only the capitalist class' (II, 20, 407), and which therefore do not re-enter the cycle of reproduction as elements of variable

²³ These two strands are brought together in the work of P. Baran, *op. cit.*, P. Baran and P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, J. Gillman, *op. cit.*, S. Coontz, *op. cit.*

²⁴ P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

and constant capital, unlike necessities or means of production. Now this may be a fruitful way of categorizing modern state expenditures. Several writers have suggested that arms and military services in general are luxury goods on this definition—the products are not productively consumed, they ‘cannot under any circumstances enter the production of other commodities’.²⁵ Yet, on the other hand, there has been the expansion of the social services which supply a rising share of the components of real wages—in the form of health, education, housing, etc. Thus the state now supplies directly part of the products which comprise the value of labour-power and which directly enter the cycle of reproduction as elements of variable capital. The question of whether this conflicts with Marx’s concept of productive labour, and of the relevance of reproduction and accumulation to his concept, is analysed in more depth in section 2 below.

Second, the growth of distribution costs, of the commercial middle classes, etc, has placed added strain on Marx’s distinction between the processes of production and circulation, and thus on the notion of productive and unproductive labour. Sweezy, Baran and others have attempted to incorporate not only the growth of salesmen, advertising workers, etc, but also increasing numbers of workers in distribution and production within Marx’s original schema. Part of current distribution costs are ‘unnecessary’ under monopoly capitalism:

‘These activities are, as we know, a part of the process of production proper. But now they become expanded far beyond the limits of what would be socially necessary under competitive conditions. Under monopoly only a part of distributive activities can be considered as productive of value; the rest are essentially similar to selling in the strict sense and share with the latter the attribute of using up value without producing any.’²⁶

Here the criterion of necessity is that which would exist under competitive conditions—an un-Marxist approach. Later, Baran and Sweezy extend the unproductive group still further to include those workers who are, in fact, concerned with realization, but are working within the process of production itself, such as those employed on product re-design, packaging, built-in obsolescence, etc. At the same time they alter the criterion of ‘usefulness’ or ‘necessity’ into a hypothetical appeal to the ‘structure of output that could be produced under a more rational economic order’.²⁷ The comparison is no longer carried backwards with a previous era of competitive capitalism, but forwards with a future socialist (or communist?) era. This would appear a fruitful extension of Marx’s historical analysis and critique of commercial workers, which throughout is premised on the notion of a *future* society without commodity production, or, in the case of supervisory staff, without class conflict. ‘To the Marxist . . . the specific historical

²⁵ M. Kidron, *Western Capitalism since the War*, London 1970, p. 56. See also J. Morris, ‘Unemployment and Unproductive Employment’, *Science and Society*, 22, 1958, pp. 194–5; J. Blake, ‘Jacob Morris on Unproductive Employment: a Criticism’, *Science and Society*, 24, 1960, p. 171.

²⁶ P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

²⁷ P. Baran and P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

(i.e. transitory) character of capitalism is a major premise. It is by virtue of this fact that the Marxist is able, so to speak, to stand outside the system and criticize it as a whole.²⁸

But, in reinterpreting Marx's analysis to take account of a changing economic structure, Baran and Sweezy also accentuate yet further the ambiguity noted above. The dividing line between a critique of the labour necessary to produce a given use-value, and a critique of the necessity of the use-value itself becomes ever harder to draw. The second and third trends mentioned earlier draw together here. If the labour required to produce a new car model incorporating several sales gimmicks is unproductive, why not the labour to produce entirely 'useless' goods and services (American funeral parlours; poodle-trimming boutiques; even cars themselves if, in a more rational economic order, a less wasteful and costly system of transport is attainable)? If this is rejected, following Marx's explicit analysis, there still remains the problem of distinguishing 'final' from 'intermediate' goods and services. Is much present-day packaging a means to the consumption of the product, or part of the product itself; is expenditure on roads or commuting services part of final consumption expenditure, or a necessary expense to further social production?²⁹ Yet, there are grounds for supposing that Marx, if confronted with the volume and composition of production today, would have incorporated this new range of activities under the heading of unproductive labour. This view is based on his analysis of the determination of needs under capitalism. The problem has been confronted by Baran in *The Political Economy of Growth*. This, the second fundamental reinterpretation of Marx's concept of productive and unproductive labour, is considered in section 3.

2. The Problem of Accumulation

To understand how the problem of accumulation relates to the Marxist notion of productive labour, it is necessary first to go back to Adam Smith's development of the concept, which Marx devoted much of his labour in *Theories of Surplus Value* part I to understanding and criticizing. The twofold characteristic of productive labour in Smith's theory has already been noted. For Smith, productive labour was intimately linked with accumulation, as the title of chapter 3, book II of the *Wealth of Nations* makes plain: 'Of the Accumulation of Capital, or of Productive and Unproductive Labour'. The chapter begins:

"There is one sort of labour which adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed: there is another which has no such effect. The former, as it produces a value, may be called productive; the latter, unproductive labour."³⁰

²⁸ P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 22. The comparison could scarcely be backwards with a pre-capitalist mode of production, or, in the case of supervising staff, with primitive communism!

²⁹ A similar dispute has centred on the items to be included in the national income of capitalist economies. See S. Kuznets, *National Income and its Composition*, 1919-1938 National Bureau of Economic Research, 1954, ch. 1. Marxist political economy brings with it the historical, critical standpoint—the question at issue is how far it should be used to distinguish productive from unproductive labour.

³⁰ A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 429-30.

This can be explained in terms of the contemporary corn-model of the economy, where a single commodity—corn—serves both as means of production and consumption good. At the beginning of the agricultural year the farmer divides his stock of corn. One part he plants and advances to his agricultural workers, the other he himself consumes or uses to support servants, etc. The first part is constant plus variable capital C which yields a further crop of corn equivalent to $C + \Delta C$ next year. The latter part is revenue consumed by the farmer and his retainers. The capital supports productive workers—farm hands—who produce a value and surplus value next year. The corn consumed as revenue ‘adds to the value of nothing’. Hence the smaller the expenditure out of revenue on servants or state officials or armies, the greater the employment of productive labour and the faster the rate of capital accumulation.

Allied to this—the core of the concept in Smith’s theory—were two other distinguishing features between productive and unproductive labour, which followed both logically from the model of economy used, and historically from the time in which he was writing. First, as Marx noted and criticized, productive labourers produce storable commodities and unproductive labourers ephemeral services. As Myint says of Smith: ‘the bias for accumulation involves a materialist bias, because only material commodities can store up labour.’³¹ The corn model of the economy involves a physical commodity in recurring cycles, part of which is stored and consumed over the next cycle. Second, associated with this, was an implicit distinction between the production of necessities and luxuries. ‘The classical economists were working on the basis of an economic system where the bulk of material commodities consisted of “necessities” or basic wage-goods, and where “luxuries” were mainly made up of the services of the menial and professional classes.’³² In Smith’s political economy, therefore, the notion of productive labour refers to labour that *adds to value* by means of producing *material* and *necessary* commodities.

In a major reformulation of the Smithian concept of productive labour Gillman, Morris and Blake interpret these characteristics to mean *labour productive of constant or variable capital*, as opposed to labour which produces luxury goods which is therefore not productively consumed in the cycle of reproduction. ‘The test of durability is to be sought not in the physical properties of commodities, but in their capacity to preserve value by transferring it to other products’³³—many ‘services’ are therefore now important in the reproduction of variable and constant capital. Similarly, the test of necessity is not the social usefulness or otherwise of the product (this contrasts with Baran—see below) but ‘the relationships to capital consumption and accumulation.’³⁴ This formulation takes note of Marx’s criticism of the ‘materiality criterion’ in Smith, whilst retaining its essential core—the identification of labour which contributes to the accumulation of capital. Thus Marx’s category

³¹ H. Myint, *Theories of Welfare Economics*, London 1948, p. 73.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 73–4.

³³ J. Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

³⁴ J. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

of productive labourers is further narrowed—from all workers producing surplus-value, to (in his notation) all workers producing surplus-value in 'departments I and II', i.e. means of production and wage-goods. The distinction between wage-goods and luxuries here assumes great importance. If the value of labour-power is socially determined, then the real wage in a period of economic growth will also rise, and new commodities and services be incorporated into it. The distinction between necessities—so defined—and luxuries is difficult to draw in practice, but this is a problem inherent in the concept of 'the value of labour-power' itself. Besides, the major items of 'luxury' production today no doubt consist of arms and military services, as noted above.

Marx nowhere relates his three-department analysis of volume II to his analysis of productive and unproductive labour. When specifically confronting the problem, he is adamant that a worker who produces a use-value and surplus-value labours productively, whether he produces guns, or jewellery or millionaire's yachts. But, as Blake notes, the object of his analysis was quite different to Adam Smith's. For the purposes of explaining surplus-value under capitalism, the difference between workers producing means of production, wage-goods or luxury goods was of no importance; for the purposes of explaining reproduction and accumulation it is critical, as Marx himself is clearly aware in *Capital*, Volume II. One must not confuse the criterion of productive and unproductive labour required 'for a political economy of growth with the criteria required by a theory of exploitation.'³⁵

Nevertheless, it is highly probable that, at the time Marx was writing, he considered productive labour to consist almost entirely of labour which produced necessary wage-goods and means of production, whereas luxuries were chiefly services supplied by unproductive workers supported directly out of revenue. In this case, his explicit analyses cited earlier, would be less relevant—they would indicate that he was aware of the logical problem when forced to confront it, but did not consider it of any *practical* importance. Evidence for this view is to be found in several passages in *Theories of Surplus Value* where the growing productivity of the productive class is shown to provide the necessary *material base* for the growth of the unproductive classes.

'Productive labourers produce the material basis of the subsistence, and consequently, the existence, of the unproductive labourers.' (IV/1, 186).

'A larger proportion of the surplus product, consisting of means of subsistence, is consumed by unproductive workers or idlers or exchanged for luxuries.' (IV/3, 363).

Even so, if faced with the widening gulf which has developed today between these two categories of productive labour following the growth of arms and 'luxury' production, Marx would no doubt stand firm on his original definition—that productive labour *does* include output of luxuries. Given the theoretical task he set himself, it is the only logical interpretation of productive labour.

One further problem arises from the Gillman/Morris/Blake interpretation of the Marxist concept. Is the second criterion of productive

³⁵ J. Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

labour (labour working in department I and II) an addition to or substitute for the first criterion (labour productive of surplus-value)? Gillman and Morris argue the former, Blake the latter.³⁶ The following diagram illustrates the alternatives more clearly.

<i>Labour employed in: Departments I and II</i>		<i>Department III</i>
<i>Labour producing surplus-value</i>	(1.) Productive labour	(2.) Marx—productive labour. Gillman/Morris/Blake—unproductive labour
<i>Labour not producing surplus-value</i>	(3.) Marx—unproductive labour. Gillman/Morris—unproductive labour. Blake—productive labour.	(4.) Unproductive labour

The major divergence is over workers creating surplus value but producing luxury goods (category 2). However, Blake suggests that, for a political economy of growth, a *sufficient* definition of productive labour is 'labour whose products can re-enter the cycle of production as elements of variable and constant capital . . . even when such employment does not directly produce surplus-value'.³⁷ Thus he would include as productive, labour in category 3, for instance health and education services provided by the state, and labour employed in scientific and research institutions (which contribute to the production of constant capital). This is a logical development of the neo-Smithian concept, but one which serves to divorce it clearly from the Marxist concept.

3. The Problem of Waste

The most explicit attempt to reinterpret Marx's concept in terms of necessity or social usefulness has been made by Baran. Unproductive labour

'consists of all labour resulting in the output of goods and services the demand for which is attributable to the specific conditions and relationships of the capitalist system, and which would be absent in a rationally ordered society.'³⁸

Here the historical viewpoint which Marx utilized to separate workers in the circulation process from production workers, is applied to categorize *all* workers, whether or not they produce a 'use-value'. It thus represents, on the one hand, a logical extension of Marx's mode of analysis to take account of the 'waste' and 'distortion' of output which occurs under monopoly capitalism. But on the other, it diverges radically from Marx, as does the neo-Smithian approach, by divorcing the concept of productive labour from the concept of surplus-value. Baran is explicit that not all remaining labour is productive of surplus-value—this is attributable only to labour producing 'essential con-

³⁶ J. Gillman, *Prosperity in Crisis*, *op. cit.*, p. 23; J. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 194; J. Blake, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

³⁸ P. Baran, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

sumption'. There is a second group of workers supported out of the surplus, but who are productive on Baran's definition:

'Scientists, physicians, artist, teachers and similarly occupied people live off the economic surplus but engage in labour the demand for which in a rationally ordered society, far from disappearing, would become multiplied and intensified to an unprecedented degree.'³⁹

Thus, just as with the Blake concept, there are two groups supported out of surplus-value (categories 3 and 4), but one is productive, the other unproductive. The actual categorization of workers is remarkably similar to Blake's: workers producing arms, luxury products, etc, are unproductive; scientists, doctors, teachers, etc, employed by the state are productive—but the theoretical derivation is quite distinct. The criterion here is not whether they re-enter the reproduction cycle as elements of constant or variable capital, but their necessity from the standpoint of 'a more rationally ordered society'.

Is there any theoretical antecedent in Marx for this mode of analysis? I think there is in his treatment of the determination of needs. Needs, according to Marx, are socially-determined, hence in our time are shaped by the capitalist mode of production. This theory is set out in its most abstract form in the *Introduction to the Critique*:

'Production thus produces consumption; first, by furnishing the latter with material; second, by determining the manner of consumption; third, by creating in consumers a want for its products as objects of consumption. It thus produces the object, the manner and the desire for consumption.'⁴⁰

It is concretely developed chiefly in the *Grundrisse*:

'The production of relative surplus-value, based on the growth of productive forces, requires the creation of new consumption; at the heart of circulation, the sphere of consumption must therefore grow in line with the sphere of production. Consequently: 1. existing consumption is quantitatively expanded, 2. increased needs are created in propagating needs to a wider sphere, 3. new needs are created, new use-values are discovered and produced.'⁴¹

Much of this writing is in the context of the 'civilizing mission' of capitalism, and does not involve a critique, from the future standpoint of a communist society, of the needs thus created. An explicit condemnation of these is found only in his earlier writings, for instance:

'the extension of products and needs falls into contriving and ever-calculating subservience to inhuman, unnatural and imaginary appetites.'⁴²

There is still controversy on whether Marx later abandoned or incorporated this critical view in his mature writings. For some, such early observations constitute an aberration on Marx's part⁴³. For Mandel,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 33.

⁴⁰ Marx's '*Grundrisse*', *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴¹ K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 312. See also pp. 313–14. Part of this is translated in M. Nicolaus, 'The Unknown Marx', *New Left Review* 48, 1968, p. 56.

⁴² K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, London 1970, p. 147 et seq.

⁴³ For example, P. Sedgwick, 'Natural Science and Human Theory' in R. Milliband and J. Saville (eds.) *The Socialist Register* 1966 p. 189.

however, 'Marx keeps in view all the time the *two contradictory aspects* of the historical reality he has experienced'⁴⁴—in this instance, the positive role of capitalism in creating the all-round development of man's needs and the negative role in distorting and trivializing these needs. If Mandel is correct, then there exists in the *Grundrisse* and his mature writings the basis for a Marxist critique of the needs fostered by capitalism.

The fact that Marx did not use this in his determination of unproductive labour can be explained in one of two ways. First, that he did not consider this relevant to the creation of surplus-value—his sole aim in utilizing the concept. Once again Baran's concept focuses attention on the *disposal* of this surplus and its wasteful or productive uses, as distinct from its *creation*. Indeed he quite explicitly dissociates the productiveness of labour from the production of surplus-value.⁴⁵ If this explanation is correct one is left with a choice of concepts, according to the goal of one's analysis. On the other hand, it is possible that the problem did not arise for Marx since he identified the production of trivial, luxury goods, etc, with unproductive labour hired directly by capitalists, landlords and the consuming classes. In this case the way is open for reinterpreting the Marxist concept along Baran's lines in the light of changing objective conditions. But at this point large questions are raised about the materialist basis of the labour theory of value, questions which are beyond the scope of this article.

III Political Implications

Two extreme views can be held regarding the political implications of the Marxist distinction between productive and unproductive labour. The first rigorously identifies productive workers with the working class, thus deduces the political class structure of capitalist society from these economic categories. The second denies any theoretical link or practical correlation between the two. Both viewpoints can lay claim to supporting evidence in Marx's writings on the subject.

To deny any simple identification of the proletariat with productive workers,⁴⁶ one has only to return to Marx's analysis of commercial workers in *Capital*. Here, he explicitly notes that commercial wage-labourers have in common with productive workers the fact that (a) their labour is exchanged with *capital*, albeit capital in the sphere of circulation, (b) that consequently they perform surplus labour, in the sense that they work part of the day for nothing, and (c) that their wages are determined in the same way as those of productive workers, reflecting the cost of production of their specific labour power:

⁴⁴ E. Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx*, London 1971, p. 110, cf. pp. 34, 38.

⁴⁵ Just as Joan Robinson wishes to, but for Baran this does not involve ditching the labour theory of value.

⁴⁶ For instance 'To Marx, the proletariat meant *productive* workers only', M. Nicolaus, 'Proletariat and Middle Class in Marx,' *op. cit.*, p. 49, n. 40.

'In one respect, such a commercial employee is a wage-worker like any other. In the first place, his labour-power is brought with the variable capital of the merchant, not with money expended as revenue, and consequently it is not brought for private service, but for the purpose of expanding the value of the capital advanced for it. In the second place, the value of his labour-power, and thus his wages, are determined as those of other wage-workers, i.e., by the cost of production and reproduction of his specific labour-power, not by the product of his labour. (III, 17, 292).

'Whatever (the commercial worker's) pay, as a wage-labourer he works part of his time for nothing. He may receive daily the value of the product of eight working hours, yet functions ten. But the two hours of surplus-labour he performs do not produce any more than his eight hours of necessary labour, although by means of the latter a part of the social product is transferred to him.' (II, 6, 135).

'The unpaid labour of these clerks, while it does not create surplus-value, enables (the merchant capitalist) to appropriate surplus-value . . . It is therefore a source of profit to him.' (III, 17, 294).

Finally, Marx specifically uses the term 'the commercial proletariat' on at least one occasion (III, 17, 301n.).

Yet elsewhere the germs of an alternative, contradictory political and class analysis can be found. In part 11 of *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx follows his remarks on the growth in the middle classes supported out of the increasing productivity of productive labour, by noting the *objective interest* of the former class in the exploitation of the latter:

'For the worker it is equally consoling that because of the growth in the net product, more spheres are opened up for unproductive workers, who live on his product and whose interest in his exploitation coincides more or less with that of the directly exploiting classes.' (IV/2, 571).

'What he (Ricardo) forgets to emphasise is the constantly growing number of the middle classes, those who stand between the workman on the one hand and the capitalist and the landlord on the other. The middle classes maintain themselves to an ever-increasing extent directly out of revenue, they are a burden weighing heavily on the working base and increase the social security and power of the upper ten thousand.' (IV/2, 573).

Here the political affiliations of the new middle class, is related in a striking way to its objective economic situation in the capitalist mode of production. This is developed by Sweezy: besides enjoying 'a standard of living which, from a subjective standpoint, ties them more or less closely to the ruling class of capitalists and landlords', there also exists 'an objective bond' linking the fortunes of the new middle class with those of the ruling class:

'For both of these reasons the new middle class tends to provide social and political support for the capitalists rather than for the workers; its members constitute, so to speak, a

mass army which readily accepts the leadership of capitalist generals.⁴⁷

Sweezy has in mind here both 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' unproductive workers—both teachers, professionals, etc. and salesmen, advertising agents, publicists and many others in distribution. It is not clear whether he includes the mass of poorer-paid commercial wage workers, who certainly do not enjoy the standard of living thus described. If these are excluded, following Marx's approach above, then already any simple correlation between economic functions, class position and political consciousness has disappeared.

It seems clear that the political analysis, to be productive, must move beyond the confines of the opposing theories postulated above. Two questions arise at this stage. First, are productive workers the only potentially *revolutionary* group in capitalist society because of their objective situation in the process of production, even though other groups share their characteristics as wage-labourers? Second, are there not potential differences in political attitudes *within* the unproductive workers; between for instance, on the one hand, those whose functions are specific to capitalist society and, on the other, those groups the need for which might be expected to expand under a socialist mode of production? In answer to the first, it would seem evident that white-collar and commercial workers are increasingly displaying trade-union and political militancy on a par with associations of productive workers (e.g. ASTMS). This spread of political consciousness follows from the increasing proletarianization of the workforce, forecast by Marx long ago. To this extent, his distinction between productive and unproductive workers is not relevant for deriving their political attitudes.

Mandel has emphasized that the proletariat, as a *revolutionary subject*, requires more than a common situation as wage-labourers *vis-à-vis* capitalists. Marx and Engels in their later analyses 'assigned the proletariat the key role in the coming of socialism not so much because of the misery it suffers as because of *the place it occupies in the production process*'⁴⁸ This general observation of Mandel's is fruitfully developed elsewhere, and it is no coincidence that, in so doing, he draws upon the theory of productive and unproductive labour:

'The massive reintroduction of intellectual labour into the process of production . . . has created the pre-requisite for a much broader layer of the scientific intelligentsia to regain the awareness of alienation which it had lost through its removal from the process of direct production of surplus value and its transformation into a direct or indirect consumer of surplus value . . . This is the material basis . . . for the possibility of involving increasing numbers of scientists and technicians into the revolutionary movement.'⁴⁹

Here employment in the process of production, hence involvement in the creation of surplus value, makes this group of workers potentially

⁴⁷ P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 284. This is developed further in Sweezy's analysis of their role under imperialism and fascism, cf. chs. 17, 18.

⁴⁸ E. Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx*, *op. cit.*, p. 25, My emphasis.

⁴⁹ E. Mandel, *The Leninist Theory of Organisation*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

revolutionary. This follows, first, from the common experience of alienation, which Mandel attributes to workers only, and second, from the critical role of scientists and technologists in the process of production. They:

'can only enhance the impact of the working class and revolutionary organization *because theory equips them with the knowledge that is indispensable for . . . the successful taking over of the means of production by the associated producers.*'⁵⁰

Their role is contrasted with that of unproductive workers—in the sphere of circulation, producers of ideology, trade union functionaries, etc—whose influence on the developing class consciousness of the proletariat is 'permanently and unremittingly' negative. But the distinction is not rigorously maintained. At times Mandel seems to be following Baran's formulation of unproductive labour as when he includes teachers with scientists and technicians in the first group, and includes journalists and other wage-labourers producing ideology in the second, non-revolutionary category. The criterion then is between that labour, the demand for which is due to the specific conditions of capitalist production, and that which would expand in a socialist system. The former workers would have an 'objective interest' in ensuring the continuation of capitalism, the latter would not and would thus constitute a potential addition to the revolutionary movement.

Such a mode of reasoning appears fruitful but it has its dangers, above all the danger of economic reductionism and a failure to relate the economic situation of groups of workers with the other contradictions of capitalist society. All that can be said with certainty is that, because of both their experience of alienation *and* their objective situation in the productive process, the involvement of the mass of *productive* workers is essential to a successful socialist revolution.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Victorian London: unending purgatory

'Rome and her rats are at the point of battle . . .' There were moments when late 19th-century London bore a close resemblance to the Rome of Coriolanus, torn by class conflict and watched by waiting enemies; and Victorians were brought up on Livy and Plutarch. As the great empire-builders of modern times they could hardly help remembering how while the Roman empire expanded it decayed at the heart, and the people of Rome turned into an unruly mob. Rome had no regular troops close at hand, London not very many, and in any case it would compromise the dignity of the imperial capital if the army had to be called in there. More to the point by the 1880s, the National Congress was coming into existence in India, with a native press quick to seize on any symptoms of weakness in the imperial masters. Early in 1886 London's rats emerged in force from their East End sewers. A meeting of unemployed led on to rioting and looting, and there was panic for several days. 'London was visited by something akin to the *grande peur*.'¹ About the economic and social background of all this, the accumulation of half-employed, half-starved casual labour in the East End,

Gareth Stedman Jones has written a remarkable book, a combination of sympathetic insight with exact investigation.² He has sifted a massive collection of printed volumes, official and unofficial, and his sources include unpublished material, especially from the records of the Charity Organisation Society and district relief bodies. Much of this work of interpreting the imperfect statistics available is technical, and only experts in such matters will be competent to assess it. The more general bearings of the subject lie within the reach of all of us. It is a book that opens up vistas in the history of London a century ago, and through this of human history, like the broad roads driven by Victorian planners through obscure slums, and is highly readable in spite of an intricate factual framework. It is enlivened by innumerable fragments of contemporary comment of every kind, and a set of illustrations helps to call a lost generation back to life from its pauper grave. There is a haunting contrast between two faces close together in a photograph of Providence Place and its denizens, a small girl's still young enough for a naïve self-conscious smile and a middle-aged woman's all grey stolid resignation. This is a work that ought to be read by every Londoner, by everyone with an interest in the problems of industrialism, or English social history, or the sour story of woman. In fact it is hard to think of anyone who ought not to read it.

London is placed here in the setting of the England of the industrial revolution. This 'revolution', the first of its kind, unfolded sluggishly, meanderingly, anarchically, with a minimum of social planning. Free enterprise excelled at seizure of short-term chances of profit—as it is now snatching at North Sea oil—with reckless disregard of everything else. The erratic pace of change allowed old ways and institutions to straggle on, with adjustments every now and then: gradualness came to seem to Englishmen the norm of all human progress, and a positive virtue in itself. London never became the hell that Paris was in June 1848 or in 1871, but for too many of its inhabitants it was an unending purgatory. Foreigners whose circumstances brought them into contact with the East End, like the poorer political refugees, were shocked.³ Rumours of this Waste Land in the country so fond of boasting its wealth and modernity were wafted abroad. Frenchmen were discovering the seamier side of Paris from writers like Zola, Russians learning from Tolstoy of the abyss under their own two capitals; London's far greater size, if no more, gave it a bad pre-eminence.

Pre-industrial London was strong in consumer trades, and shipbuilding, sugar-refining, silk-weaving and many other skilled crafts flourished. All this was crippled by 'the traumatic impact of the Industrial Revolution upon the older industries' (p. 145). Silk-weaving failed to adapt itself to machine methods, shipbuilding to steam and iron, engineering too petered out; other old businesses removed further away. By the 1880s, the inner industrial perimeter, once the focal point of London

² Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London. A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Clarendon Press, 1971, £4.50), p. 292. All following page-references in brackets are to this work.

³ *Op. cit.*

⁴ F. M. Wilson, *They Came as Strangers. The Story of Refugees in Great Britain* (1959), pp. 125-6.

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manufacture, was fast becoming an industrial vacuum' (p. 154). But while occupations flagged, the human beings who lived by them stayed behind, in numbers swelled by fresh immigrants drifting in from the countryside, and from Ireland, and in a minor way from the ghettos of eastern Europe; an immobile army of misery refuting the economists' easy assumption that labour would flow with the same quicksilver readiness as capital to wherever there was opportunity. Stedman Jones supplies a clear analysis of the reasons, which went for long unrecognized. Casual workers had to be within walking distance of whatever odd jobs might turn up; their wives had to be able to pick up work too; as newcomers to another district they could not hope for credit from shopkeepers (pp. 81 ff.). Huddled in their ragged heaps they could keep going 'a robust if sometimes elementary working-class culture', with street stalls and rat-baiting and public-houses of their own, and a feeling of community (p. 173).

'Plebeianization'

This industrial revolution in England accentuated 'pre-industrial characteristics' in London (p. 26). At the social apex London preserved amid the swirl of change a good deal of the flavour of a *Residenzstadt*, a town existing because a prince held his court there. Below this level, but no more completely cut off from it than from the famishing multitude at the bottom, were skilled artisans of the old sort, the fine flower of the pre-machine labour world which came to full bloom just as history was about to blight it. It was a class, as Stedman Jones says, intensely political, with a social and mental life centering on trade society and coffee-house (pp. 338 ff.). But it was rapidly eroded by the new industrialism, submerged in a struggle for bare survival with no wider politics than those of the sweatshop. A legion of tiny enterprises clung to what trades remained, like furniture-making and clothing, and tried to fend off factory competition by submitting to its living standards which the petty masters themselves often had to share. Primitive techniques were kept alive by 'a cheap, overfilled, unskilled labour pool of women and immigrants who were prepared to work at sub-subsistence wages' (p. 22). A great deal of work was done at home; a return to the cottage-industry of early capitalism. As old employments vanished the docks became the common, though very niggardly, refuge of all who could find nothing better, and therefore stood out disproportionately as the heart of the casual labour problem. Men hung about at the gates like Italian farm labourers standing in the village square in hope of being hired for the day. Often those lucky enough to be taken on had eaten nothing since the day before, and had to knock off work and leave the docks as soon as they had earned enough for a meal, which gained them a reputation for laziness (p. 93). Their children at school could often learn nothing because they were crying with hunger (p. 96). Around a tenth of London's population, 400,000 people, had no regular work; 'It was a basic precondition of the casual labour market that supply should be permanently and chronically in excess of demand' (p. 67).

Stedman Jones with his usual alertness to the interacting cross-currents that combined to make life so much the more precarious shows how 'harsh winters were a much more common occurrence in the 19th

century than in the 20th' (p. 44). It is to the well-clad sheep that the wind is tempered. Casual labourers shared with the countryman long spells of enforced idleness and dependence on sun, rain, wind, and underwent all the severities of the Nature so much worshipped by prosperous Victorians, while exiled from its charms.

Bigger but not Alone

At times casual labour seems to be presented in this book too exclusively as an outcome of London's predicament, in this particular epoch. It certainly had features of its own there, of kind and of degree. But London's dreadful size by comparison with any other European city, which invested all its evils with a dimension of the grotesque, was no new thing. Hamlet's mind was in London, not Elsinore, when he called the world a foul and pestilential congregation of vapours. London had never been without its sediment of down-and-outs, the discarded servants, younger sons, decayed ostlers whom Falstaff dismissed so scornfully, 'cankers of a calm world and a long peace',⁴ as if war were the right besom to sweep them away. Shelley's vision of London as the maelstrom perpetually sucking in fresh lives, that 'Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more', was an old nightmare. To all good Englishmen, as to Cobbett, London was an abomination, a Great Wen. But it was not always taken for granted that this invertebrate, unproductive monster would always retain its lead in numbers. The opening of the Manchester Ship Canal induced predictions of Manchester and Liverpool growing into one vast whole, outstripping London in population and as commercial metropolis of the globe.⁵

Destitution in the capital drew more, though still very inadequate attention, but insecure employment, with too few jobs to go round, was a ruling feature of all 19th-century England. Stedman Jones's remark that 'casual labour can be seen as only the most extreme point of a continuous spectrum of degrees of under-employment' (p. 53), is not relevant to London alone. It is not indeed relevant only to the working class; professional groups had to bear the same cross, as we may remind ourselves by thinking of Conan Doyle sitting in his surgery waiting for patients, or the briefless barrister in *Trial by Jury*. We have a harrowing picture in *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* of housepainters starving for work in a small town not far from London, where Stedman Jones notices this as one of the least organized, most exploited of trades (p. 60). In mentality, as well as in conditions of life, the gulf lay not so much between these unfortunates and the millworkers, as between them and the departing race of skilled artisans. Tressell's painters are hopelessly impervious to ideas. A new labour aristocracy might grow up to succeed the artisans, but a labour intelligentsia such as they were, political to the fingertips, has never been born again.

As between London and the industrial north, what stamped the former was less its having a large pool of casual labour than its *not* having a

⁴ *Henry IV*, Part I, Act 4, Sc. 2.

⁵ This anticipation spread abroad too; see, e.g., an article in *The Chilean Times*, 7 March 1891, in F.O. 16, Vol. 264, Public Record Office.

large factory proletariat. The first of these could exist, as it had always done, without the second, but the second could not exist without the first. Not only docks and sweatshops, but mills as well, required a surplus of labour-power, a reserve army. Unemployment was rife even in average times, in slumps it swelled prodigiously; its fluctuations must have been more extreme than London's seasonal tides. Engels laid stress on this in his study of Manchester, and described how the unwanted kept body and soul together by 'begging, stealing, street-sweeping, collecting manure . . . performing occasional small jobs'. He added: 'In every great town a multitude of such people may be found.'⁶ On top of this Manchester itself was soon evolving into a metropolis, serving as commercial and financial centre of an industrial region to whose towns some of its own industries hived off, and to which it stood in the same relationship as London to the country at large, though never physically or morally so much cut off from it. Either way, its workers' housing was of the same dismal sort as London's. 'I would rather be hanged in London than die a natural death in Manchester,' Julian Harney wrote to Engels.⁷ But an urban pattern could diverge still further without escaping from the blight of capitalism. In industrial Belgium a dense network of State-owned railways and waterways, with cheap fares for workmen, enabled them to live far from their jobs, and brought some improvement of housing and hygiene, but it meant long travelling hours, and dispersion kept unionism weak and wages very low, while sweated home industries might spread like a fungus over entire slum townships.⁸

Industry and the Capital

Another puzzle that does not become altogether clear is why London failed in the 19th century to get on the industrial track. Stedman Jones discusses this phenomenon in economic terms, stressing exorbitant rents in the central areas (pp. 19 ff.). But industry could move to or grow up in outer suburbs or nearby districts, and did so to some extent; why did it not do so sufficiently to drain off at least some layers of the stagnant pool? It may be that we need to look at other influences too, such as have helped to decide whether a country will take to industrial capitalism swiftly, like Japan, or sluggishly, like India, or not at all, like Peru. Why industry grows in one part of a country and not another cannot always be easily explained by reference to the location of raw materials or the proximity of markets or the sea.

Old political centres and their environs grow fixed and conservative social structures and habits, repellent to any brusque innovation. In the 19th century their populations went on swelling, as they have done in our age in Asia and Latin America too, but it was often hard to comprehend, as visitors to Madrid frequently felt, what all these inhabitants could be doing for a living. All through history the town has been largely parasitic on the countryside, and the metropolis has carried this furthest by concentrating in itself the parasitism of State and ruling

⁶ *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844 (London ed., 1892), pp. 84-5.

⁷ Cited in M. Jenkins, *Frederick Engels in Manchester* (1951), p. 10.

⁸ See R. C. K. Ensor, *Belgium* (1915), pp. 61-2 and Chap. IX.

class. Rulers everywhere in old days—in ancient Italy, in France, in Spain, in Kashmir—took good care to keep the populace at their palace gates in good humour, by providing entertainment and also by market regulation to ensure food supplies and limit prices, always more or less at the expense of food-growers.

Keeping Well Away

If London remained un-industrial, we should remember that the industrial revolution had its first start in England, where it was bound to begin as a stranger; it was something accidental and unwanted, certainly unplanned, owing nothing to government and wanting nothing from it except to be left alone. It suited both of them to be well away from each other. The new species of entrepreneurs, hardbitten northerners often risen from the ranks, felt the kind of antipathy to London's polished pretentiousness as Americans felt to England. To have been within too close range of it would have chilled their hardy temper, reduced them prematurely to the *bourgeois gentilhommes* they have since become. They flourished better as cocks of their own walk, away from the capitals' landowning aristocracy.

London was the natural home too of the financial plutocracy, and Edward VII found German-Jewish stockbrokers more congenial company than Lancashire millowners. This geographical demarcation between an older and a newer ruling class reflected a drawn battle or compromise between them, an arrangement by which the millowners instead of ousting the landowners allowed them to go on running much of the State apparatus. This was good for peace and quiet at home, bad in many other ways. For one thing it helped to keep British industrialism, aloof in its northern strongholds, insulated from the academic world while the mandarins could not grasp the need for science and research. It perpetuated far too much of the past, including a vampire-landlordism that sucked blood from many of the country's veins. Highland clearances, Irish rack-renting, mining royalties, were all part of the price. Inflated costs of land for urban development were (and are) nowhere worse than in London, where the Duke of Westminster's income from rents about the end of the century was believed to be about two million pounds a year. In more ways than one London, the headquarters of all this *ancien régime*, stood to the rest of the country as Britain stood to its empire: still more as Britain would have stood if Hobson's forecast had come true, and its industries had migrated to Asian colonies.

Edinburgh and Dublin

London's two understudies, Edinburgh and Dublin, followed its example and confined themselves to administration, commerce, finance, or to elegant lounging and spending. They made up for the loss of a royal court by being nurseries of lawyers, clerics, scholars, snobs, and, though each was excellently situated for industry, produced little beyond beer and books. We have a truly metropolitan account of Edinburgh in 1859, more honeycombed with castes than India, luxury and beggary in frightful contrast. Dublin was as Thackeray found it in

1843, when the consecration of a Bishop of Aureliopolis appeared to be the news of most concern to the press;⁹ while shipbuilding faded away as it did in London.

In general the old capitals of western Europe were of similar type to London. In France, where industrialism found its second home, again mostly under its own steam, governments instead of welcoming it to their own vicinity came to regard it, especially after 1848, as an uncomfortable neighbour. Engels saw in the reconstruction of Paris under the Second Empire a scheme not only to bring a rebellious populace under firmer control but to emasculate it, to foster 'a specifically Bonapartist building trades' proletariat dependent on the government and to turn the city into a pure luxury city.¹⁰ Apart from engineering works connected with the railways (this became a standard feature, since each country's railways radiated from its capital) industry mostly limited itself to production in small units of the luxury goods or frivolities known as *articles de Paris*, or in Italy and the old Hapsburg lands as *galanteria*, appurtenances of gentility. Brussels followed, at a long interval, the same track. Vienna likewise specialized in light industry and luxury or precision products. Madrid's industry was lighter still, exhaling little but tobacco-smoke; it was the capital legally of Spain, morally of Castile, a realm still embedded in the past and disposed to leave factories and their muck and money to Basques, Catalans, or foreign investors. Rome displayed the metropolitan parasitism in its acutest form, especially before 1870 when as the seat of papal rule it turned out, besides works of art, only prayers and priests, and drew revenue from all over the world to feed its flocks of prelates, prostitutes, and paupers.

State Aided Industry

In the us industry grew up later than in Britain, but with the same independent outlook, and rooted itself in a Black Country of its own, at a distance from Washington. But in the Old World a different pattern is discernible in countries coming late on the industrial scene, from middle Europe to Japan. Here we see government (and finance) and industry closer together in location, because closer in mutual need: the State requiring technology for power-politics, the factories requiring tariffs, subsidies, orders, the kind of patronage that bankers or trading corporations always had greedy beaks open for. (The ostensible if not the real reason for the removal of Pakistan's government from Karachi was that in the home of big business official virtue, that delicate plant, is exposed to too many temptations.) This newer industry, half a creation of the State, was harnessed also to German, Magyar, Japanese nationalism, and the popular appetite for jobs and national grandeur. A capital city now had to earn respect by more useful attributes than mere dignity. Governments had less reason to dislike industry on their doorsteps because it was so much under their guidance, because it enjoyed national prestige, because at this later date some rough notions

⁹ J. Heiton, *The Castles of Edinburgh* (1859), pp. 1, 247-8, etc; Thackeray, *The Irish Sketch Book* (1843), Chap. 1.

¹⁰ Engels, *The Housing Question* (1872), pp. 70-1 (London ed., 1936).

of welfare for the workers were in sight, to keep them quiet; and because, in the last resort, they all commanded powerful conscript armies.

Time and Place

After Hungary gained autonomy by the *Ausgleich* of 1867 its manufactures showed a quite rapid growth, with Budapest very much in the forefront and producing machinery and chemicals as well as railway plant and liquor. Far more notable is the case of Berlin. Germany's great industrial region was away in the northern Rhineland, where it got a start while Berlin was only capital of Prussia. After the national unification in 1871 Berlin quickly grew into another big focus of industry, making use of waterways to become an important port although a hundred miles from the sea.¹¹ It contributed a wide variety of metal wares, and was famous for its turbines and electrical machinery. State and municipality played an energetic part in smoothing the way. Down to 1870 sanitary conditions were vile; within a few decades it was admiringly noted in England that 'Berlin has in point of organization become the model city of Europe. In no other has public money been expended with such enlightened discretion'¹². When this transformation started a nation in arms had just fought and won two wars; there was some feeling, unknown in Britain until much later, that Germany ought to be a land fit for heroes to live in—if frugally; and while heavy restraints were placed on the workers, some concessions to the common good might also be demanded from their employers. A long tradition of paternalism was expressed in the Hohenzollern family motto of *Suum cuique*, 'To each his own'.

Further east, St. Petersburg wore a far less happy aspect, but there too, under the patronage and policing of a despotic government, industry was growing. This was an artificial modern capital, not stranded like Moscow in a tradition-ridden hinterland. Much of the investment and management was foreign, and suffered no sense of inferiority at the near presence of ruler and ministers, but preferred to nestle under their wing. All the same an archaic regime ran a risk by bringing this explosive force into its house; eventually the outcome was to prove fatal, as it almost was in 1919 for German capitalism.

But in London any socialist party would have found it hard, as Stedman Jones says, 'to build a united revolutionary movement in a largely non-industrial city' (p. 346). Just as the lower middle-class man was always in dread of sinking into the working class, the 'decent' workman was in dread of being engulfed permanently in the swamp of casual labour. An unadventurous caution was fostered among those with anything to lose; in those who had nothing, an incapacity for anything like organization. Now-and-then workers or waiters-for-work had no regular employer to resent and react against; their enemy was whoever sent harder winters with fewer crusts. If they spontaneously burst out it would be against society at large rather than against anything so

¹¹ See W. H. Dawson, *Industrial Germany* (1912), pp. 69-71.

¹² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed. (1911).

definite as capitalism; they had no politics beyond those of the passing moment. In fact they rioted, or broke into food shops, astonishingly seldom. If occasional hunger can be a stimulant to action, lifelong malnutrition is more often a depressant.

The Locus of Hegemony

On the other hand it must be kept in mind that no revolutionary movement was taking shape anywhere in the country, either south or north; which *Outcast London's* concentration on politics in the capital leaves somewhat in the shade. Nothing is more striking than the swift ebbing of Chartist ideas after 1850, so complete that within a generation scarcely a memory of them survived.¹³ Was this certain to happen? We may recall an observation of Gramsci, that any working class takes on a particular complexion from its economic environment.¹⁴ He was contrasting the Rome of his day, as seat of government (and spout of Fascist oratory), with Milan, Italy's financial and commercial nerve-centre, and Turin, its chief workshop. It may be that what was lacking in England was a labour movement strong in London and with a firm economic base there. In a capital city a working-class movement acquires a specific character and political significance, because like the other inhabitants—however hazily so far as most of them are concerned—it has a metropolitan consciousness; it identifies itself, even in opposition, with nation and State. It is born aware of a duty to lead, it knows itself heir to the sceptre of the kings who have reared the city.

In modern Britain, it has often been said, the industrial working class has lacked a *hegemonic* impulse, an ambition to take hold of the State and remake society, by comparison with the far less numerous working class of France or tsarist Russia. The explanation must lie partly in its not having a strong base in London, and its consequent exclusion from the highroad of national history. In Spain the workers, mostly Catalan or Basque, turned more readily to separatism or anarchism than to socialism; in Lancashire their philosophy was, and is, not socialism but 'labourism', absorption in an unpolitical community life and bread-and-butter struggle little less alien than the bombs and gunfights of Barcelona to any unfolding national destiny. Paris workers all through the century might belong more to workshop than to factory, but they were being undermined as a class much less rapidly than the Londoners by industrial growth and competition outside, and hence could hold on far more firmly to a tradition of action by the People. While ordinary Londoners had forgotten that their city once led a revolution that astonished Europe, Parisians had vibrant memories of a similar struggle far closer to them in time. 'Our working classes are eminently inferior to the mass of the French people,' George Eliot wrote in the enthusiasm of 1848. 'In France the *mind* of the people is highly electrified; they are full of ideas on social subjects . . .'¹⁵ This was hardly true of the French nation *en masse*, but it was true of the Paris workers.

¹³ This fact has been impressed on me by Prof. J. Saville. I have profited greatly from discussing 19th-century England with him.

¹⁴ A. Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and other writings*, trans. L. Marks (1959), p. 26.

¹⁵ *George Eliot's Life*, ed. J. W. Cross (1885), Vol. 1, p. 131.

Pauper Tories

It does not seem that the casual poor ever made much trouble on their own. It was when those who normally had jobs suffered acute spells of unemployment, and showed signs of mutinying, that the stragglers joined in, and might go further. It was unemployment that brought mass demonstrations in Hyde Park in 1866-7, followed by food riots in the East End. It was the same 20 years later, except that by then the SDP was in the field, and the prospect of the better-off workers and the others coming together in a revolutionary tide seemed more threatening. Really the tide was running towards something more modest, a 'New Unionism', and even this only fitfully. Unionism could not cure London ills: the docks soon relapsed into their old condition (p. 348). Politically neither trade unionism nor casual labour, with its demoralized destitute or criminal fringe—the *lumpenproletariat* of Marxism—was by itself a force for socialism. Pauperized inner London was easily got to vote for flag-waving Tories, organized labour was content to trail behind the Liberals.

Engels condemned the disorderly demonstrations of 1887, and hailed the disciplined strike movement. Perhaps the future he was hoping for needed a blend of the two chemical elements, or of regular battalions and *franc-tireurs*. Nothing can be achieved without organization, yet once the people agrees to observe traffic regulations and keep to one side of the road in its marches—as John Burns got the striking dockers to do (pp. 315-6)—it is all too likely to reconcile itself to the rest of the established code. A 'mob' at least avoids this. It has all the deficiencies, the unreliability, that Shakespeare depicted, but also some better endowments: above all, audacity, spontaneity, disregard of the arbitrary chalk-lines within which society coops up its fowl; a cheerful conviction that the Law is an ass. 'The very fickleness of the multitude', Mark Rutherford wrote during the crisis period, has some value as an antidote to our 'impregnable conventionalities'.¹⁶ This was in an autobiographical novel depicting the horrors of the London slums and the human souls lost in them in 'brutish degradation', 'sunk beyond ray of sun or stars', minds as inaccessible as if of another planet.¹⁷

Engels it may be remarked, in spite of a Prussian esteem for discipline, could applaud the sansculotte spirit that he found in Irish rebels—'wild, ungovernable, fanatical . . . If I had two hundred thousand Irish, I could overthrow the whole British monarchy'.¹⁸ But in his early days he was expecting revolution to break out of its own accord, a jacquerie that the next slump would set off, and to be 'the bloodiest ever waged'. Socialist ideas would be wanted not to kindle the flames but, on the contrary, to keep them within bounds, to exert a check on 'bloodshed, revenge, and savagery'.¹⁹ After 1848 and subsequent lessons he saw more clearly the obstacles that revolution would have to bear down, and the necessity of a well-drilled *force de frappe*. And the effervescent mob—

¹⁶ Mark Rutherford's *Deliverance* (1885), Chap. I.

¹⁷ *Id.*, pp. 64-5.

¹⁸ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁹ *The Condition of the Working Class*, pp. 296-7.

spirit that can bubble up from slum depths has been very hard to catch and link to any progressive cause, only too easy to harness to reaction, as so often in modern times from the *lazzaroni* and the San Fedists of Naples onward.

Most of the time in post-Chartist England, and particularly in London, what the rich were likely to fear was not a serious movement of sedition, but sudden irresponsible tumult, like a cyclone, a mob outbreak as portrayed by Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). It was a thought familiar to all western Europe after 1848 that the proletariat portended a new barbarian invasion, a collapse of civilisation into another Dark Age. Sinister memories revived by Dickens were refreshed by more recent doings abroad. 'London was haunted by the spectre of Parisian barricades' (p. 178). Nearby capitals—Paris, Rome, Berlin, Vienna—were all disagreeably prominent in the outbreaks of 1848. Misgivings about barbarian hordes, in the shape of ragged immigrants and then of socialists, spread across the Atlantic. New York like London was developing as a financial, not industrial, nucleus; it was hemmed into a limited area, and the poor showed 'a singular objection to living beyond a ferry',²⁰ very likely for the same reasons that kept them shut up in inner London. There too the Paris Commune reinforced fears among social investigators of an anarchical explosion 'which might leave this city in ashes and blood'.²¹

Crisis or Angst

Stedman Jones's estimate of the degree of danger to the social order that existed, or was felt to exist, is difficult to confirm. His thesis is that there was 'a crisis of social and industrial development' (Preface)—'Victorian civilization felt itself increasingly threatened by "Outcast London"' (p. 1)—but in what precise sense threatened? If there are some shifts of emphasis as to this in his book, they may reflect faithfully enough fluctuating Victorian moods. Emotionally the middle classes always have much of the unstable, confused, fanciful humours that they are fond of imputing to—or projecting on to—the mob. But they might well feel some confusion about the perils supposed to be besetting them. All the outbreaks abroad ended in failure, and whiffs of grapeshot, once fairly tried, everywhere proved superior to the powers of darkness. Since 1848 the British army had quelled an Indian Mutiny, and what could be done thousands of miles away could surely be repeated a mile or two down the Thames. Even if troops were not plentiful the middle classes were not without means of defending themselves, for when enrolled as special constables they represented a not negligible force.²² This it is true could not be mobilized at a moment's notice, and if the menace was mainly of lawless violence much property might be plundered, many lives lost, before rescue could come, in London as in outposts of empire.

The bourgeoisie continues to suffer various alarms—about an in-

²⁰ C. L. Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York* (1872), p. 52.

²¹ *Ib.*, pp. 29–30.

²² This is another point that I owe to Prof. Saville.

surrection of a desperate Third World, about atomic war, about over-population. But if we measure this anxiety by the *action* it induces, it must appear rather trivial. Only the dread of foreign enemies persists effectively, because there are vested interests concerned to play on it. One gauge of the fear or compunction inspired by the East End may be looked for in the charity disbursed by the West. Fear, at any rate, was sharpest in the mid-1880s. When the great Dock Strike in 1889 passed off peacefully, under orderly leadership, there was a huge relief, 'a cathartic release from the social tension' (p. 315). Sad augurs mocked their own presage, and subscriptions even came in to the strike fund from the well to do. Yet charity was far from lavish, even at the height of the tension. Early in 1886 a Mansion House fund was opened for the distressed poor—to the indignation of diehards because the poor would regard it as extorted from the rich by the riot of 8 February (pp. 299–300), as it doubtless was. Even under this spur it only rose, quite slowly, to a total of £78,000 (p. 298). This seems a perfectly derisory sum for distribution among scores of thousands of the needy, a bagatelle such as the affluent West today is wont to bestow on lands still under the primal curse of poverty. Trollope's Lord Silverbridge lost over £70,000 on one race at Doncaster, which his ducal parent paid up with scarcely a groan.²³

'Oh, damn sympathy,' exclaimed Lord Caversham. 'There is a great deal too much of that sort of thing going on nowadays.'²⁴ He must have been speaking for many. On the whole a tolerant contempt may have been the prevailing attitude of the better off. It found expression in the term 'Cockney', a nickname like those bestowed on native peoples overseas. (It derives apparently from *cock's egg*, a bad or misshapen egg, and was in use from the 14th century to mean a milksop, an effeminate townsman, and from the 16th a Londoner, as the townee of townees.²⁵ However, alarms that were from time to time felt, by the more nervous, were magnified by ignorance, by the little that was known of what went on in the slums. It was as if London were inhabited by two species of intelligent life, unable to communicate with each other.

City Boundaries

A geographical as well as moral boundary-line between the classes was growing in big towns, but in capitals more than others, and hardly anywhere so rigidly as in London. In the earlier European mode of urban life rich and poor lived close together, often as in old Edinburgh or Paris in tall tenements divided into apartments, straggling upwards towards garrets where the humblest dwelt, with the most prosperous on what Italians call the 'noble floor', and sometimes, as in Madrid, a cobbler or other craftsman plying his trade in the entrance hall. This situation fostered some rough and ready feeling of neighbourship, a relic of feudal times. The first departures from it were made by monarchs, mistrustful of the temper of their capitals, who built new palaces and royal colonies at a safe distance from them, Philip II at the

²³ Trollope, *The Duke's Children* (1880).

²⁴ Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband* (1895), Act 3.

²⁵ C. T. Onions, *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966).

Escorial, Louis XIV at Versailles. It was an ill-conceived experiment: king and court were far enough away to be out of sight, not far enough to be out of mind; fellow-feeling dwindled, suspicion deepened. Spanish rulers soon gave it up, which helps to explain their longer survival later on. Louis' example was soon followed by Peter the Great, in the more sweeping style proper to a country as vast and elemental as Russia, with the building of a whole modern, planned city hundreds of miles from medieval Moscow, to house the directors of a new era—a régime far more foreign than Russian.

This foreignness was only an exaggeration of the tendency that grew on upper-class society as the 18th century went on to cultivate refinement and elegance, to become more urbane and urban, to powder its wig and play quartets, read books and affect rationalism, even occasionally to wash. All this meant growing apart from the common herd, with its gross manners and dull wits; it made it natural for a gentleman to want to expand his park and his privacy by removing cottages from within sight of his windows, as the laird of Cramond near Edinburgh and many others did; and for the genteel to want a separate city quarter of their own, out of sight of Lazarus and his sores. At Edinburgh a New Town was being laid out, from the late 18th century, on a low plateau north of the medieval High Street. There was some intention by the planners to include flats for respectable artisans—whose services would be needed—as well as for gentlefolk; a feudal-collective frame of mind lingered more tenaciously in Scotland than in England. But the general result was a secession of the better-off classes from the old town, always crowded and stinking but once a family gathering of classes, leaving it to decay into mere slum. Dublin underwent a similar mutation about the same time, when the precincts of Stephen's Green and Merion Square were laid out and the well-off abandoned the grimly picturesque town round the old cathedral.

In a more high-handedly aristocratic Vienna it was the upper class that kept possession of the old inner city, while the lower orders were displaced from it as yokels were from a gentleman's demesne. In Paris the reigning bourgeoisie was as autocratic, and after 1848 Court and upper classes created a 'new town' or West End for themselves on the site of the old, barbarously clearing away many relics of past times, with an outer extension into the western suburbs. Spanish energies were not equal to such an operation, though the Gran Vía of Madrid does represent one thoroughfare cut (by a British contractor) through the labyrinth of the old town, and by the last decades of the century fashionable suburbs were coming into being.

In London there was a drift like this from an earlier date, with a general separating out of the classes, a kind of social electrolysis. Deserted except by daytime, the old City formed a barrier of vacancy, north of the river, between one London and the other. Their frontiers could not everywhere be so clearly demarcated: as Engels remarked, 'right behind the most elegant streets the dirtiest workers' quarters are to be found, Soho for instance'.²⁶ This was a demi-monde or debatable land

²⁶ *The Housing Question*, p. 57.

where the rich found some of their *seigneurial* *plaisirs* and the poor benefited—or suffered—by their patronage. For the most part division was complete enough. That 'East is East and West is West' could have been said with as much propriety of London as of Europe and Asia; the catchphrase 'Civilization begins at Oxford Circus' reveals a likeness of associations. So do the ordeals of Wodehouse's clubmen when freakish fates cast them and their top hats adrift among the Great Unwashed, in unknown purlieus where—as they must have said to themselves—the white man's foot could seldom have trod. In Wodehouse social reality often lurks under a mask of burlesque. Far away in the new cities sprouting in the empire like Calcutta there was from the start the same Apartheid, here carried to its logical extreme by the magnification of class into race. Each consisted of a British settlement, with grandly open spaces, and a 'Black Town' of congested hovels, where few of the ruling race except policemen ever penetrated.

Masses of Servants

London's human resources were left to run to seed. One big labour force was kept doing nothing; another, the host of domestic servants, doing nothing better than waiting on its betters. Platoons of servants were a feudal survival, but little was left of the patriarchal atmosphere and the rough security it provided for dependants past work. 'Only a small proportion of male servants were kept beyond middle age' (p. 77), though great men might exert influence to get places for them as messengers or the like in government offices.²⁷ Upper-class England prided itself on the perfection of its training of horses, dogs and servants, but this was a neo-feudalism of the cash nexus. The servant was not a humble member of the family, as English travellers were surprised to find him in Spain, or as he still may be in India, but an entity designed to be seen and not heard, a human automaton. The rich liked their footmen and carriage-horses to look well-fed and glossy (though not *happy*, since a well-trained face must be expressionless), but did not care whether the less visible underlings in the recesses of their mansions, like the *'twenties* described by Jessica Mitford,²⁸ were in good condition or not; far less whether porters or old-clothes women in Limehouse ate any breakfast.

We can summarize the extraordinary paradox of Victorian London. The world's most enormous city, this huge and apparently singular mass, was in fact the expression of the deep divisions that have immobilized English life. Its separation from the industrial North and Midlands severed the hegemony of court and capital from the power of the factory proletariat. But industrialization rebounded on London's masses with devastating effect. They were packed into a morbid agglomeration, atomized by casualism, hunger and despair. This hapless, seething populace, deprived both of the energy of Petrograd's engineers and the cohesion of the artisans of Paris, was segregated physically into an eastern ghetto, socially into a multiplicity of corrupt and servile occupations. In the end it turned with relief to the circus of Empire.

²⁷ Mark Rutherford, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

²⁸ Jessica Mitford, *Hans and Rebels* (1960), Chap. 6.

Surveying the Consequences

But not until Charles Booth's survey of the 1880s did the Victorians themselves take any serious interest in the urban poor. Government practised, as in most fields, the masterly inactivity prescribed by economic doctrine and it was left to individuals or private groups to explore the malady and seek remedies. Hence the study of the preconceptions of these men and their social circles, which forms Part III of *Outcast London*, is of exceptional interest. The impression of them it conveys is one of self-confident amateurishness, a mentality typical of England's directing classes in those days and revealed at large in the empire, of which indeed the East End might be viewed as one of the less well-run colonies. Meagre charity was paralleled by shallow thought. And this was part of a pervading superficiality of British thinking about society and politics, which threw up no great name in that epoch, and no successor to Marx and Engels after their 40 years' sojourn. England was too well satisfied with its snug political bargains and pragmatic methods, too little divided on fundamentals, to be roused to more than the empirical shrewdness of a Bagehot. Liberal thinkers of the late 19th-century school—Bryce, Sedgwick, and the rest²⁹—enlightened enough in their way, had an insulated, glass-case knowledge. They came from the gentry, grew critical at college of their own dull-witted class, but could not firmly attach themselves to any other.

England was rich in less professional observers—Ruskin, George Eliot, Carlyle, and many others—who possessed valuable insight into many aspects of man in society, but who (apart from William Morris) were without any basic comprehension. They were onlookers who saw much of the game—much that Marxism, preoccupied with bedrock issues, neglected. There were significant advances in economic theory, for the country was still among the industrial leaders, but these were highly technical matters, as much beyond the range of most of the leaders of opinion as industrial technology was. With J. S. Mill and Marshall a very cautious optimism was creeping in, a glimmering notion that 'chronic poverty' might not after all be 'the inevitable lot of the great majority of mankind' (p. 11). Those who undertook the task of setting the East End to rights had no grasp of the real causes of its poverty; they were content with 'the crudest tenets of political economy and tended to exaggerate them to the point of caricature' (p. 265). One theory flourishing in the 1880s, and endorsed by Booth, Marshall, and other notables, was that the human species must deteriorate in an urban environment (p. 150); it offered a seductively easy answer to the question why East Enders were poor—they were poor because they were degenerate.

London's Mandarins

In the forefront of those who tried to tackle the problem were representatives of the professional upper-middle classes—lawyers, higher civil servants and clerics—whose rallying-point was London. These formed

²⁹ I owe much here to discussions with Dr C. Harvie, of the Open University.

a *noblesse de robe*, an offshoot more than in old France of the landed gentry rather than of an urban bourgeoisie, and seldom moving far enough mentally from their origins to become critical of them. They had the same faith as their fellow-mandarins in China in their own innate virtues, their hereditary competence to guide the country by natural ascendancy or 'force of character', without any specific preparation for the task. They idealized the village squire, now on the decline in his own habitat, into a figure much like that idealized Chinese landowner, the Confucian Superior Man. In more practical terms this rural orientation went with 'the preference of employers for a docile and pliable labour force which they naturally associated with the countryside' (p. 130).

To this social background Stedman Jones convincingly ascribes the 'remoteness and anachronistic flavour' of the prescriptions put forward by the Charity Organization Society (p. 300). Since London had few industrial magnates, and the East End lay abandoned to the poor, its vestries and local boards were manned by plebeian nobodies: to conservatives this 'usurpation of the functions of a natural local governing class' was the obvious cause of things going amiss (p. 248). What was called for was 'a new urban gentry' (p. 269), or squirarchy, dispensing aid personally and visibly, looked up to by its humble neighbours and keeping them in wholesome awe.

When it came to translating vague lord-of-the-manor philosophy into practical measures, ideas were scarce. The chief and most constant theme was slum clearance, the endeavour to get rid of destitution by getting rid of the tenements where destitutes lived and multiplied. It was to prove an Augean task, with pauperism coming back by the window as fast as it was pushed out of the door. As early as 1838 a Select Committee reported in favour of driving broad thoroughfares through choked-up, almost impenetrable wildernesses, and thus admitting both fresh air and a circulation of more civilized habits (pp. 166-7). It must have had in mind, like Haussmann a little later in Paris, a possible circulation of police and troops as well; this opening up of highways had some likeness to General Wade's road-building a century before during the pacification of the Highlands. Much other antique housing perished to make room for railway-stations, warehouses, and so on. In a haphazard fashion this may have meant a greater displacement of people than the reconstruction of Paris (p. 159).

Naturally it was those with lowest earnings who came off worst. Those dislodged from one spot crowded into another and reduced this in turn to a slum; often they were then pushed out again by sanitary inspectors, like the homeless orphan in *Black House* continually moved on by the police wherever he lies down to sleep, until at last he lies down to die. 'By the 1880s overcrowding had reached a crisis point in central London' (p. 214). Yet even now the loudest note was determination not to have any housing schemes tainted by anything socialistic. Then in the 1890s workmen's trains multiplied, and enabled more of them to live away from their jobs; yet in other districts the old evils still festered. 'The casual labour problem was solved neither in terms of employment nor in terms of housing' (p. 327).

Origins of the Welfare State

All the same the flashpoint of the mid-1880s did, it seems, bring about 'a major re-orientation of middle-class attitudes'; it helped to bring *laissez-faire* under attack from both left and right wings. By comparison with a true mob, a clergyman could now place 'orderly Lancashire operatives' on a par with 'a docile agricultural peasantry' (p. 243). Trade unionism therefore could begin to be accepted as an equivalent in the industrial realm of Her Majesty's Opposition in the political; much as in the America of the Progressivist era soon to open they came to be seen as useful ballast to capitalist society, even if a nuisance to the individual capitalist. In 1886 Joseph Chamberlain while President of the Local Government Board sanctioned public works to relieve unemployment, and this was adhered to by later ministries of both parties (pp. 327-8). Chamberlain was no squire, but a *novus homo*, a newcomer to London and the political scene with a record of municipal reform as Mayor of Birmingham.

Stedman Jones points out that historians have often painted the new 'Collectivism' too rosily. In the first stirrings of the 'welfare State' a less hostile attitude towards the deserving workman was accompanied by a harsher one to the undeserving poor, now felt as a national blot and disgrace. In this guise an old religious teaching on sin was preserved, when religion itself was on the wane. Other, more careless religions have given the beggar a kick or thrown him a penny, according to the mood of the moment. Christianity, especially in its Puritan phase, has deployed vast ingenuity to prove both that the sinfulness of the human race is part of the economy of the universe, and that man is fully responsible and culpable for his sinfulness. The practical sense of this is that the pauper is poor and depraved because of the necessities of capitalism, but his depravity must not be allowed to go unpunished.

The Dutch, who in the 19th century carried to great perfection the science of counteracting laziness among tropical natives, had some analogous methods of managing their own paupers. Their Poor Colonies caught the eye of 'the great economist' Jacob whom Sir Walter Scott met in London in 1828, and who had a plan for 'supporting the poor, by compelling them to labour under a species of military discipline'.³⁰ Carlyle wanted to help the unemployed by mobilizing them into labour battalions, and shooting those who objected.³¹ (His programme about the same time for solving the 'nigger question' in the West Indies came out of the same basket.) Stedman Jones speaks of the vogue in England of the 'Elberfeld system' worked out in a German manufacturing town, which placed batches of poor families under the watchful care and authority of well-to-do citizens (p. 260); from this to the Nazi system of invigilation does not seem very far.

Labour colonies came to be a favourite nostrum; the more optimistic held that they might improve paupers enough for them to be put on the land as farm labourers, or sent to the colonies. Marshall favoured the

³⁰ J. G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Chap. LXXVI.

³¹ *Letter-Day Pamphlets*, No. 1, 'The Present Time' (1850).

idea as did Booth, who was careful to prescribe long working hours and no wages; he reckoned them a proper field for State socialism, because they would help to protect individualism from socialistic pressures (pp. 306-8). Arnold White argued that the pauper and criminal classes were inherently more prolific than others, and wanted them sterilized (p. 310), a revealingly racialistic view of the social problem. He also edited a volume of studies of foreign immigration, principally of poor Jews, and was very firmly in favour of keeping them out³²—which might ease London's problem in some minor degree, but could do nothing to cure it. In 1904 enforced enrolment in labour colonies was first advocated in an official report, and both Fabians and Liberals were by now for compulsion; while the 'father' of the welfare State, Beveridge, was for 'a complete and permanent loss of all citizen rights including not only the franchise, but civil freedom and fatherhood' (pp. 331-2, 335).

None of the labour colony schemes were put into effect. The Liberal Party still disliked any extension of State activity. Administrative problems would have been considerable, and there might be trouble over compelling the poor to come in. We should allow something for a lingering respect for freedom. In the Great War it took a long time to get conscription imposed. But the war, by making work for everybody helped to scotch the theory of destitution being due to congenital incapacity (p. 336). After it London industry, with new lines like motor cars and electric wares, 'accelerated dramatically' (p. 348). Again one is left wondering why this could not have happened earlier. London and Paris can be said to have been catching up in the 20th century with the capital cities further east which were so hospitable to industry in the late 19th.

Since then England, and London above all, have acquired new versions of their old problem—the aged and solitary poor, and a mass of mostly penniless immigrants far more numerous than when so much fuss was made about them in the 1890s. Once more congestion reduces housing areas to slums, while a mile away palatial offices arise, for which there may or may not be some use. In a wider horizon we face the question of whether the backward regions of the globe can ever free themselves from misery, as Victorians faced that of whether their own working masses could free themselves or be freed. Our ruling classes can scarcely congratulate themselves on much more good will or wisdom or success than their forerunners displayed. But here is one more reason for us all to ponder the lessons of this book.

³² A. White ed., *The Destitute Alien in Great Britain* (1892).

review

Labour and the Economy

Britain's fifth Labour government came to power in October 1964 at a time of rapidly maturing economic crisis for the capitalist system. The political existence of the Labour Party, as of all reformist, social democratic parties, rests on its ability to gain reforms for the working class within the capitalist system. A crisis, therefore, which can only be deepened by the granting of reforms, magnifies the contradictions of reformism. It was inevitable that Labour, given its working-class base, would attempt to introduce some reforms. But it was equally inevitable that it would be driven more and more towards policies designed to restore the level of profitability necessary for capitalist accumulation. The commitment to capitalism led to the failure of the reforms; the strength of the organised working class within the party paralysed the social democratic leadership in its efforts to solve the crisis on behalf of the bourgeoisie.

Reformists cannot admit this contradiction without declaring their political irrelevance. Their instinct is to blame the economic failure of the Labour government on either foreign gnomes or some simple technical economic mistake. So, in *Labour's Economic Record*¹ (a book of essays full of much very useful information on various aspects of Labour's economic record, written mostly by economists who were actively engaged in formulating policy), Wilfred Beckerman blames both economic and political failure on the wrong timing of devaluation: 'there is little doubt that the decision to give absolute priority to the exchange rate was one of the great mistakes of economic policy . . . the failure to devalue earlier was a major cause of the defeat of the Labour Party in the 1970 General Election, in so far as it was largely respon-

¹ The following books and pamphlets are discussed in this article:
W. Beckerman (ed.), *Labour's Economic Record 1964-70*, Duckworth, 1972 £4.95.
P. Townsend and N. Bosanquet (ed.), *Labour and Inequality*, Fabian Society, 1972, £2.20. *Labour's Programme for Britain*, Labour Party, London, 1972.

sible for the deterioration on the home front—notably with respect to rising prices, worse industrial relations and higher unemployment in the last two years of the Labour Government.’ (pp. 62–3)

Beckerman claims that if devaluation had occurred after Labour’s re-election with a workable parliamentary majority in 1966, then it could have been smaller and therefore less disruptive than the eventual 15 per cent devaluation of November 1967. But neither the worse balance of payments position by the end of 1967, nor the extra official debts which had been incurred prove conclusively that a 1966 devaluation would have been smaller. For the absolute requirement, in 1966 as in 1967, was that the speculators should be convinced that the new parity was sustainable. Moreover the greater official debts in 1967 represented merely a change in the identity of Britain’s creditors. From March 1966 to late 1967 the current account was on average in surplus; this implies that there was no additional burden of debt which could justify a larger devaluation in 1967. Finally, since the devaluation would have done nothing to prevent the deterioration in underlying competitiveness in 1966 and 1967, a smaller devaluation in 1966 would most probably have left the need for another devaluation a year or two later.

But even if a 1966 devaluation had been smaller it would have taken place at a time when the switch of resources from private consumption to exports would actually have been more difficult to achieve than two years later. For, despite the July 1966 cuts, there was actually a very substantial increase in public expenditure on goods and services (about £500m) between the first halves of 1966 and 1968, while between the first halves of 1968 and 1970 there was a £200m fall. This means that, even though overall growth was a bit higher in the first period, the squeeze on private consumption after a devaluation would actually have been greater. With a 15 per cent devaluation resulting in a switch of resources of some £1,200 to exports, private consumption would actually have had to fall slightly over these two years, and would have grown by hardly $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent a year if the devaluation had been only 10 per cent.² This compares with a 2 per cent annual rise in private consumption in the two years after the 1967 devaluation. So it is wrong for Beckerman to argue, in the concrete conditions of 1966, that after a devaluation at that time ‘there would have been at least something left for higher consumption, and the chances of a breakdown on the wages front would have been that much less’.

So Beckerman’s assertion that ‘the failure to devalue earlier explains between one third and the whole of the failure to achieve the planned

² Even a 3 per cent overall growth rate would have allowed a less than 1 per cent p.a. rise in private consumption (with a 15 per cent devaluation); and it is extremely unlikely that, with unemployment at 1·2 per cent early in 1966, and foreign bankers breathing down its neck, the Government would have allowed so fast an increase in output. This calculation is based on the National Institute’s analysis of the effects of devaluation (*Economic Journal* Supplement March 1972). All the resources are assumed switched from private consumption as it is doubtful whether public spending could have been reduced much more by 1968 than was achieved by the July 1966 cuts; and anyway the earlier devaluation would probably have increased private investment, reducing the possible growth of consumption.

growth rate' (*Labour's Economic Record*, p. 52)—the 25 per cent growth target for 1964–70 of the National Plan which was, in fact, missed by 11 per cent—requires the assumption that workers would not have reacted to a squeeze on their real wages in such a determined way if it had occurred in 1966–8 rather than a couple of years later. For faster growth is not just a question of loosening the balance of payments 'constraint', which an earlier devaluation certainly would have done at least temporarily. It also requires the Government to refrain from dampening any expansion by deflationary policies, and this is unlikely when wages are rising rapidly. Most important it requires the maintenance of high profit levels, which were already under pressure from rising wage costs and intensifying international competition. The devaluation was a response to this declining profitability and its aim was to cut real wages and increase profits in export industries and import-competing industries by reducing competition and allowing more inflation. To see it as a technical solution to a balance of payments problem is quite superficial. But devaluation can only restore profitability if the reduction in real wages is not resisted. As we argued above, there is no reason to believe such resistance would have been less after an earlier devaluation.³

Beckerman and his co-authors have ignored the connection between devaluation and profitability because they think in terms of a balance of payments problem or crisis, never in terms of capitalist crisis. On the other hand, they do seem to have been convinced by the facts of falling profitability and rising wage shares which we described in this journal (*The critical condition of British capital*, NLR 66). Their reactions to these facts are, in one case, irrelevant: Michael Stewart says they are 'such an unsatisfactory measure of Labour's success in improving the distribution of income' which nobody ever thought they were. But in other cases the reactions are extremely revealing of the ultimate political limitations of social democracy.

Michael Stewart also argues, for example that, falling profitability, because it may tend to reduce capital accumulation, 'cannot augur well for the relative position of the poorer and weaker members of society' (*Labour's Economic Record*, p. 78). Derek Robinson makes the point more clearly in relation to the working class as a whole:

'A further gain from a trade union point of view may be the switch of total income from profits to employment incomes. However the latter point could prove to have some undesirable longer term consequences if the relative decline in profits leads to a slowing down of growth as a result of a decrease in retained profits to finance investment.' (*Labour's Economic Record*, p. 314.)

And Beckerman makes it even more specific by naming names:

³ Harold Lever has attempted to argue (*New Statesman*, 21 April and 12 May, 1972) that devaluation was unnecessary and that the Labour Government should have resorted to more borrowing from abroad. Beckerman himself has effectively demolished this view (*New Statesman*, 5 May, 1972) which seems to be based on a feeling that devaluation was unnecessary because it had unfortunate consequences ('the gravest cost inflation I remember').

'Consequently, even if militant trade unionism as practised in this country has raised the share of wages in the national income by two or three percentage points, this has been much more than offset by the resulting higher unemployment and slower rate of growth. In other words it has been against the interests of the working classes. Mr Jack Jones and Mr Hugh Scanlon are either incapable of understanding this or are guilty of cynical betrayal of the interests of their members.'

In other words, our reformists chorus, the struggle for higher wages is permitted but must always be subordinated to the preservation of profitability. That is the duty of working-class leaders.

For reformists who do not recognize the crisis and its contradictions, the alternative to blaming some technical mistake is a rather incomprehending depression, exemplified by the book of Fabian essays *Labour and Inequality*. One editor of this, Peter Townsend, writes that 'the analyses present a gloomy picture. They confirm the inability of the government to use its power on behalf of the weaker members of society'.

This rather uneven and repetitious book is concerned largely with the failure of reforms—in particular how the Labour Government's policies impinged on economic inequality. Michael Stewart's chapter in Beckerman's book is concerned with the same subject and finds that 'there was a measurable improvement in the distribution of income under Labour'. What this seems to amount to is the limited achievement of some relative improvement in the position of those on state benefits (see also Atkinson's chapter in *Labour and Inequality*), and some easing in the regressiveness of the tax system for the lowest income groups and increasing progressiveness for the richest groups. This left the tax system neither regressive nor progressive between about £1,000 p.a. and £5,000 p.a. in 1970, no real change from the 1964 position. Moreover it was ironically inflation, which the government was trying to stop, and the tax increases required to secure higher unemployment, which caused the increased progressiveness at the top and bottom of the income scale. Stewart's claim for an improvement in the position of the low paid is in effect demolished by John Hughes' chapter in the Fabian book, and, as Townsend has pointed out, Stewart ignores the effect of higher unemployment on the number of people in the lowest income groups (see *The Listener* 27 April, 1972 and Stewart's failure to meet this and other criticisms in subsequent letters). An important point is also that something like half of the rise in the proportion of GNP devoted to health and education, emphasized by Stewart, is due to the relatively fast rise in the prices of these services, and not to any real growth. These benefits are progressive, in the obvious sense that they represent a higher proportion of a poor person's income and their rapid cost increases make them appear increasingly important. But in absolute terms rich families receive higher benefits (largely because their children stay longer at school) and this difference would be greater if account were taken of the point, stressed in a number of Fabian essays, that poorer families often receive services of lower quality.

Labour's new draft programme for the next Labour government

(*Programme for Britain*) reflects (through mists of wishful thinking and compromise) the same approach as the two inquests on the last one. It naturally refuses to see in the present situation a crisis of capitalism. Record unemployment is implicitly blamed on the failure of the Heath administration to 'push forward with policies for economic expansion'; there is low investment because 'private industry has lost confidence in the prospects of growth in the British economy'. No attempt is made to explain the failure of the last Labour government to reduce unemployment in the few years up to 1970 (see *Labour's Economic Record*, p. 279). To blame the increase in inflation during the last two years of the Labour government on 'international inflation coupled with the consequences of devaluation' is quite vacuous when the causes of the international inflation are unspecified, and when devaluation itself is not seen as an attempt to restore the profitability of British industry at the expense of the living standards of the working class.

The programme argues that the even faster price increases under the Tories have 'largely been the direct result of Tory government policy to make the distribution of income more unequal'. But this is to mask the antagonism between capital and labour which must become more intense under conditions of capitalist crisis regardless of the government, by concentrating on the mystifying distinction between 'the poor and the rich'. Of course, the pressure on working-class living standards would subside a bit if the Conservatives' redistributive policies were reversed. But much of the pressure anyway comes from the attempts of Capital to restore its disastrously narrowed profit margins; and most resources screwed out of the working class by such devices as higher rents are not used to lower tax rates on the rich, but rather to reduce corporation tax and increase state help to industry. This redistribution, which attempts to reverse the gains achieved by the working class in wage negotiations, will be as much an imperative for a Labour government attempting to make capitalism work as for a Conservative government.

When the programme talks of controlling key prices it admits that where such control 'does not provide a level of profit adequate for re-investment we shall consider the possibility of government investment to meet the firm's capital needs'. The proposed public shareholdings in the firm will not alter the contradiction for, just as in the case of subsidizing nationalized industries, the resources must be squeezed out of the working class by taxation in order to permit the investment to take place; and if this is not done by 'fair rents' some other methods must be used.

The programme's claim that in an expanding economy 'rising wages and expanding profits for reinvestment can co-exist', ignores the fact that for British capitalism at the moment it is imperative for profits to expand a great deal faster than wages. The programme, though quite correctly rejecting the argument that there is 'some fundamental change in the way the economy operates', totally ignores that the pressures to which British capitalism is subject from its international rivals and from the working class have intensified.

Lame ducks are recognized, but not as symptoms of these pressures—'it is our view that wherever an industry depends for its very existence on huge public handouts, *and* (our emphasis) where it is clearly incapable of being put on its feet without wholesale restructuring throughout the industry, then that industry must consider itself a clear candidate for a substantial measure of public ownership'. For various reasons some extension of public ownership is considered for the ports, possibly some financial institutions, shipbuilding, pharmaceuticals and aircraft. A new stateholding company on the lines of the Italian IRI, with majority or complete shareholdings is seen as an 'instrument for integrating industries and firms into the public sector'. As well as meeting 'the new economic needs of the nation', nationalization can help equalize the distribution of wealth and power. Unlike Henry Ford 'whose accumulation was inseparable from the growth of the business which in turn was closely linked to his own ingenuity and effort', shareholders now are 'not responsible for the continued growth and prosperity of the company' and yet their fortunes grow. 'Nationalization of industrial enterprises by way of an exchange of government bonds for the shares of companies would be the ideal remedy.' This is total nonsense since the interest they would receive by way of compensation, which must be paid out of taxation, would be equal to the dividends they forego (indeed greater initially due to their loss of long-term growth prospects). But anyway, the programme says, 'in a political democracy nationalization is bound to be a piecemeal process', so a form of capital sharing scheme is better.

All this amounts to an incoherent, non-socialist approach to the question of nationalization and not, of course, the seeds of a programme around which the working class can organize in a period of capitalist crisis. *Programme for Britain* talks of substituting production for profit by production for need; yet it claims, predictably, that its principles are 'above considerations of class'!

The leadership of the Labour Party, along with the authors of *Labour's Economic Record* and *Labour and Inequality*—its technocrats and its liberal consciences, respectively—assume that capitalism is permanent and improvable. Failure to examine the causes of the present capitalist crisis goes hand in hand with the belief that the interests of all are best served by making capitalism healthy. Unsurprisingly their analysis contributes little either to real understanding of the record of the last Labour government; or to political preparation by socialists for the next.

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See inside back cover

The economic growth or recovery which has occurred in France, Japan, West Germany or the USA, has had only a feeble echo in Britain; unemployment remains high and investment in manufacturing extremely low. Elected in June 1970, the Heath government devised a series of novel strategies to recover the fortunes of British capital. One year after our publication of an initial assessment of Heath's new course (NLR 70), it is now clear that the particular pattern of success and failure which the English government has so far encountered, still leaves the major questions of the domestic class struggle undecided. Britain's adhesion to the EEC, as Tom Nairn argued in NLR 75, certainly represents a crucial if belated triumph for conservative strategy. Not only does it open up wider horizons for British capital, but it has thrown into disarray the Labour party and the forces to its left. In other respects, however, the objectives of the Heath government on the home front have been forcefully checked by the militancy of large sections of the industrial proletariat. In this issue Anthony Barnett makes an extensive review of last year's great strike wave in Britain. His analysis shows that Heath's strategy failed to mobilize bourgeois power effectively against the working class, in part because of structural constraints within the framework of capitalist democracy. The Heath government has already drawn necessary tactical conclusions from its defeat. The task before the working class movement is now that of taking the whole struggle forward to a higher level, by aggressive attacks on the whole stability of the Conservative regime.

In the last issue of NLR, we published an interview with Hedda Korsch about her life with Karl Korsch, both in Germany and in exile in the United States. This issue contains some excerpts from Walter Benjamin's diary—entered during his discussions with Brecht in the late 1930s. The extracts, introduced by Stanley Mitchell, give a remarkable impression of Brecht's cultural and political intelligence, here less cryptically revealed than in his published writings. The selection is taken from a new book of Benjamin's writings about Brecht published by NLB.

Inter-imperialist conflicts in the last quarter of the 20th century seem likely to take a distinctly different form from that of the period 1945-70. The capitalist world has moved away from the unchallenged hegemony of a single power. The competition between the United States and other imperialist powers is increasingly affected by the political hostility between Communist countries, and to a lesser extent, by the rival ambitions of ex-colonial states. International diplomacy is now reassuming some of the complexity which it exhibited at the beginning of the 20th century, superimposed upon the underlying antagonism between different social systems. As the new epoch opens, detailed examinations of inter-imperialist alliance are particularly valuable. In this issue, Jon Halliday and Gavan McCormack outline the uneven relationship between Japan and America. They situate both the startling increase in Japanese economic penetration of the US home market and Nixon's retaliatory measures over trade and investment, which form part of a continuing American attempt to prevent Japan from playing an independent political role commensurate with its economic strength.

Anthony Barnett

Class Struggle and the Heath Government

In the spring and summer of 1972, British miners, railwaymen and dockers each in turn successfully defied the Heath Government. On no previous occasion in British history has the administration of the day suffered such a sequence of reverses from groups of workers pursuing economic demands. The results of these outstanding events took many socialists, at home and abroad, by surprise. That there would be hard struggles in 1972 was clear before the year began, that advances were possible was plain to see, but the scale of the victories which were actually won surpassed most expectations. This article will try to interrogate these events, from the miners' determined stand to the TUC's muffled attempts to compromise. Necessarily it will be limited. Any ongoing analysis must at this stage be constrained by the still uncertain upshot of the crisis of the past year. In particular, the economy may expand rapidly as in France after May 1968, or it may return to partial recession as in Italy after the *contestazione* of 1969.

But while it is hard to assess the unity of events that are still unfolding, the continuation of the conflict makes it more urgent to debate its initial lessons.

On 18 June 1970, the man whom even the Conservative Press thought would lose the election won it; his 'against the odds' victory meant that Heath took office with minimal political debts. Indeed, the Conservative who had helped him most in becoming Prime Minister, Powell, was also his most outspoken opponent and was isolated on the back benches. In addition, one of the legacies of the swift decline of the Macmillan era in 1963 was that there were only two politicians of any seniority in Heath's first cabinet: Home, a cipher clinging to the Foreign Office, but popular with the Party rank and file despite his lamentable failure when he had been Prime Minister; and Maudling, whom Heath had defeated in the first-ever leadership contest decided by formal ballot of Conservative MP's.¹ Both Home and Maudling represented a failed past and neither could exercise leverage on the main course of events. Thus, while the reasons for Heath's election victory (as well as Labour's defeat) deserve separate study, its effect was a Cabinet dominated by a man who had won power despite many of the forces that 'naturally' assist (and mould) Conservative Premiers into office. This gave an individual stamp and, for England, an unusual clarity to the policies and then to the changes of policy that marked the opening years of Heath's government.

1 The Events

There were three prongs to Heath's initial strategy. His first priority was external: the orientation of British capitalism was to be re-directed through entry into the EEC. Internally, the Wilsonite mechanisms of economic 'control'—the Prices and Incomes Board, the Industrial Relations Corporation, regional development grants, etc—were to be dismantled and financial restrictions on lending lifted: British industry was to be 'freed'. Lastly, the trade unions were to be brought 'under the rule of law'; legislation would restrict national strikes, force union officials to reduce unofficial action and undermine the power of shop-floor militants. Heath hoped that an unfettered capitalism would expand into the new European market, its working class held down by legislation. Central to what Heath called his 'revolution' was the retreat of the government from day-to-day conflicts of industrial expansion. In effect, without surrendering budgetary powers over the economy, Heath aimed virtually to dissolve the institutional links which had grown up between government, capital and labour. His was a policy of combining powerful legislation with cabinet *laissez-faire*, of imposing a strategic line whose tactical implementation would be left to market forces and courts of law. Before analysing this contradictory strategy, it will first be necessary to examine the extent to which it was actually put into practice, and with what results.

¹ There was a third, Macleod, who died a few weeks after taking office. For the way Heath consolidated his dominance over the Conservative Party see section III of Tom Nairn's *The Left Against Europe?*, NLR 75, September/October 1972, pp. 31-6.

There were 20 months between the Conservative election victory and their Industrial Relations Act becoming law. During that time the government, and Heath in particular, came to be loathed by many workers in a powerful and specific way. The feeling about him was that he was 'unfair', 'uncharitable', 'faceless and heartless'. The quality of 'concern' is much appreciated in the British Isles; sacrifices will be made so long as those who demand them are appreciative. Heath's administration was not.

An example was its attempt to close the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. UCS was an amalgam of yards integrated into a single company by the Labour Government in 1968. This rationalization had originally been organized by Wedgwood Benn who saw to it that all the old yard owners were generously compensated and given seats on the new board. Naturally a decrepit group of shipbuilders, whose families had failed to invest in their yards for generations and were incapable of running them singly, lost even more money when they tried to do so collectively. Yet by 1971, new management and the beginning of system-built ships had made UCS potentially profitable. As the State was the major shareholder, it stood to get something back from its subsidies. Instead the Conservatives maximized its losses. In October 1970, Davies, the new Minister of the Department of Trade and Industry, cut off the company's credits. This ruined its cash flow and it never recovered. In February 1971, the credits were restored when the biggest employer on Clydeside, Rolls-Royce, went bankrupt. But on 28 July 1971, Davies told the House of Commons that, after receiving a report from a commission on the future prospects for UCS, he was going to close the company down; 2,500 jobs might be saved. The Conservative benches cheered this announcement which entailed loss of work for a possible 20,000 people in a single city at a time of mounting unemployment. The Labour Party was enraged. It particularly angered Labour MPs that Davies showed no sympathy for the men; he would not even say he was sorry. It is easy to see why this attitude should arouse wrath and apprehension in the Parliamentary Labour Party. It removed the possibility of elevating a squalid result of capitalist calculation to the dignity of a national tragedy. Thus it was that one Labour MP could accuse the Conservatives of the worst of all possible crimes: 'the government has made the class struggle respectable'.²

Unemployment and Factory Occupations

The government's action in relation to UCS was particularly provocative because it broke so explicitly with a fundamental bi-partisan goal which had been repeated by every government since the war—commitment to high employment. In the year ending October 1971, 435,000 jobs disappeared.³ Well over a 1,000 people a day lost their jobs altogether and by January 1972 unemployment had risen to over one million. In contrast to Germany, where the inflation of the 1920s

² Alasdair Buchan, *The Right to Work, the Story of the Upper Clyde Confrontation*, London 1972, p. 71. This is a handy account of the events that led up to the occupation of UCS, and of the atmosphere at the time.

³ *The Times*, 10 January 1972.

had been traumatic, in Britain it was the unemployment of the 1930s which had left a lasting scar.⁴

The strength of this feeling was quickly made manifest when there were outright closures, or the threat of them. Thus at UCS, following Davies' announcement, the yards were seized. This action generated a vast burst of publicity and intense local support which in turn initiated a wave of other occupations.⁵ Following Clydeside's example, Plessey workers occupied a nearby factory threatened with closure and there have been around 20 such seizures since. These actions generally prevented the owners from moving machinery and realizing the value of the assets, and provided an effective focus for resistance.⁶ At UCS and elsewhere, workers learnt that occupations could be a stalwart defence against the liquidation of jobs. While the actions were unofficial, unions gave them uneasy support and such occupations have also been peaceful: 'Managements have been wary of direct legal confrontations with the occupiers (cutting off telephone or electricity is uncommon), mainly because they fear that the unrest might spread to other factories within their group'.⁷ Reporters have been sensitive to the degree of support such actions have. If working men decide to take control of productive property, without damaging it, in order to preserve its continued use and their jobs, then force can only be used against them at a high political risk. According to the judge in the only case so far in which a writ of possession was granted to the owner of a factory occupied by 20 or so employees: 'This is a small firm and it would be possible for a small number of people to get them out. But if it was a big factory you might want 2,000 police with tear gas'.⁸ Occupations have been local affairs, then, not just because loss of jobs from a closure hits the local population, but because employers, police and judges feared that any attempt to crush them would simply draw in widespread solidarity actions. Thus these occupations scared the Government and local Conservative Party officials as well. Nor had they forgotten that the unemployment of the 1930s was one of the reasons why Churchill lost the Election in 1945. But in its early days the Heath Administration did not grasp the likely consequences of its policies. Instead, its confidence was reinforced by a series of successes over badly led strikes.

⁴ In a survey commissioned by the Institute of Economic Affairs in October 1971, 51 per cent of the respondents thought that unemployment was 'the most important issue for the welfare of the country as a whole' while only 12 per cent of them regarded it as the most important issue for themselves personally. In contrast only 21 per cent considered rising prices the most important issue for the country at that time, although 72 per cent reckoned that it was the major issue for themselves. *IEA Readings 8, Inflation*, 1972, p. 47.

⁵ At one point there were four BBC-TV camera crews, including one from religious broadcasting, at UCS at the same time (Buchan, *op cit*, p. 87); the UCS fighting fund received nearly £500,000 in donations from all over the world. There is no space here to discuss the long and mixed history of the occupation.

⁶ There were another forty odd occupations for straightforward wage demands, mainly during the spring, as part of the engineering workers' claim. This use of the sit-in tactic was not very successful. See 'The Pay Off from Sit-Ins', *The Times*, 14 September 1972, and 'The Year the Work-In Worked', *The Sunday Times*, 24 December 1972, and also 'Sit-Ins', *The Times*, 12 June 1972.

⁷ Joe Rogaly, 'Sit-Ins and the Rule of Law', *Financial Times*, 17 October 1972.

⁸ *Ibid.*

The Postmen's Strike

Even before they attempted to close the Conservatives made trade-unionists bristle by their blunt treatment of the postal workers. The miserably paid postmen had been forced to strike in January 1971, and after eight weeks they were defeated. The result was not surprising; their union, the UPW, was financially weak and organizationally inadequate. It had previously failed to solidarize with actions by the post office engineers; and these engineers now in turn continued to operate the phone system (the Post Office's most profitable sector) and thus sabotaged the postmen's strike. The UPW did use some of its limited funds for advertisements in the bourgeois press,⁹ and the postmen retained considerable sympathy. But in the end the Union's leadership capitulated, forcing its angry and disillusioned members back to work.

One effect of the strike was to teach other unions the danger of isolation. It also stirred up mass resentment. The Conservatives, full of their apparent success, misread this resentment for resignation. They used the postal workers' strike to enunciate a new holding policy to remain in operation until the Industrial Relations Act came into force, if not afterwards as well. This was the 'N minus 1 Norm', which meant driving down the level of wage awards by a steady percentile point—at that moment down from 8 per cent to 7 per cent. As the rate of inflation was higher and increasing, this was a direct attack on wage earners' standard of living.

Refusing to liaise with either side of industry, the Cabinet ploughed its lonely furrow; Gormley, the miners' President, pathetically complained: 'I've never met John Davies once, and he is the minister in chief of the whole question of the coal industry. It's fantastic . . . to think they want to be so remote'¹⁰ (*sic*). British capitalists were equally shocked by the new Government stance: 'The Chairman of one of our largest industrial companies said "I have never in my experience felt so cut off from government. One gets used to the idea that governments don't understand business problems, but this is the first time I've had the feeling that they positively don't want to understand"'¹¹—in this way the cabinet cut themselves off from their natural allies.

In the meantime, the TUC had organized against the Industrial Relations Bill. But after a mounting series of unofficial mobilizations and a record-breaking official demonstration in February 1971, further action ceased. During the winter of 1970–71 power workers had been assailed with extreme virulence for their go-slow. In the spring of 1971 the postmen were crushed, despite the modesty of their claim. In the summer the UCU went into the hands of the liquidator. In the autumn the country's second largest union, the AUEW, abandoned its national claim in favour of local bargaining, and the municipal workers accepted the Government's Norm.

⁹ Thought to be the first time in the UK that such an attempt was made to gain popular support. Later the miners did the same.

¹⁰ Interviewed in *Seven Days*, 1 March 1972.

¹¹ *Guardian*, 19 June 1972.

The Cabinet was jubilant. The N minus 1 Norm, a dry run for its overall policy, was presented as a fact of life which not even it could affect—ministers could withdraw from wage bargaining while imposing their wishes. So, at first, the Heath administration's policies appeared to succeed. Inflation was redistributing wealth to the wealthy. Union actions had been defeated. The proletariat was resentful but seemed resigned. The media were doing all they could to ensure that those who were not resigned became so.¹² Then the miners went on strike.

The Miners' Historic Victory

The complacency of the ruling class and the impact of the miners on it can be traced via the editorials of the *Financial Times*. On 7 January 1972 it led off in confident fashion: 'It is extremely difficult to see what the miners hope to gain out of the national strike they are bent on starting this week-end.' Four days later it told its readers: 'With the miners now firmly involved in their first national strike since 1926 it now seems quite likely that the coal fields will remain closed for maybe as much as a month or more.' True to this calm prediction, it observed, a month later: 'The government . . . has to decide what to do to end the coal strike . . . there is no sign yet that the miners on the one side and the Government and the National Coal Board on the other have much if any idea of where the compromise might lie.' On the same day Carr called the two sides in for talks at the Ministry of Employment. The next morning, Wednesday 9 February, the same paper commented: 'Although everyone professes to be anxious for an early end to the strike . . . the two sides are still a long way apart. Talks can do nothing but good.' It was getting worried. The talks collapsed, a state of national emergency was declared. 'It was only last Thursday', Saturday's issue declared, 'that the seriousness of the situation created by the coal miners' strike even began to be generally appreciated . . . from the point of view of the economy the upheaval which it now faces could hardly have come at a worse moment.' Heath was now visibly losing. 'The action of the miners', its next issue insisted, 'shows the urgent need for the Government to redefine the permissible limits of picketing.' Finally, after the settlement, in a long melancholy statement the FT examined the defeat—not of the miners as it had assumed six weeks before, but of the Government: 'It will be some time before we shall be able to assess even the direct costs of the coal strike to the country . . . But this immediate cost pales to insignificance compared to the potential long-term damage done not merely to the economy, but to the country as such. Most important in this context is that the authority of Government has been damaged . . . In war—and that is what the miners' dispute turned out to be—the active support of the community as a whole is essential. The Government failed to obtain it. That is why it lost.'

The Background to the Miners' Struggle

The miners possessed a carefully documented brief, drawn up for them

¹² *The Guardian* achieved the quintessence of hypocrisy, mingling 'concern' with 'realism'. While it declared that it had an 'instinctive sympathy' (*sic*) with the miners it advised that 'unions which have accepted the Government's challenge have been beaten', 7 January 1972 and 10 January 1972.

by the Trade Union Research Unit, which helped them win the support that the Government had assumed would flow to itself against the Union.¹³ Between 1958 and 1972, 580,000 miners were made redundant. Only a quarter of a million remained. Over the same period, those who did remain raised the *per capita* productivity of the industry by 80 per cent. This exceptional increase was the result of intensive rationalization and the introduction of continuous cutting techniques. Mechanizing the coal face, in turn, greatly increased dust underground; the physical cost of modernization, despite improved pit-head facilities, was a rise in pneumoconiosis, while untried machinery took its toll in deaths and injury. In return for all this the men not only accepted the huge lay-offs and quite frequently moved hundreds of miles to new mines, they also suffered a substantial decline in earnings relative to those of other workers and an *absolute drop* in income. Given the rate of inflation at the beginning of 1972, the Coal Board's offer, limited by government policy to 7 per cent, would have aggravated this process of declining real wages.

The miners are proud of their traditional role. They have struck at almost every turning point in British labour history. How had they come to accept such a decline? The fundamental cause was the cutback in the industry. Every wage demand made by the men had been met with the threat of more pit closures and less jobs. But much of the credit for sapping the miners' resistance during the 1960s must be given to two outstanding renegades, one from the right wing of the Labour Party, the other from the right of the CP—Robens and Paynter.

In his recently published autobiographical account of his ten years as head of the Coal Board, Robens comments that without Paynter, 'I doubt whether my hopes of getting the industry off piece-work and eliminating the strikes that so often were caused by it could have been possible.'¹⁴ Paynter, a Communist, was Secretary of the Union and fought unofficial strikes of any kind. On his retirement in 1969 Paynter left the Communist Party; later he joined the Commission of Industrial Relations.¹⁵ Robens himself was recruited to head the Coal Board from the Labour front bench. When he retired, a year after Paynter, he had accumulated directorships of the Bank of England and *The Times* and various jobs in the City. He then declared in an interview that he was 'no longer a socialist'.¹⁶ Paynter and Robens had worked well together bullying the miners into acquiescence. Their virtually simultaneous retirement was a contributory cause of the strike. The miners gained a new leadership; Lawrence Daly an energetic left-wing socialist who played a decisive role during the strike, became the secretary of the

¹³ The Unit's work for the Miners' Union resulted in the Penguin *A Special Case? Social Justice and the Miners*, by John Hughes and Roy Moore. This presents the miners' evidence as argued before the Court of Inquiry by Lawrence Daly and includes verbatim exchanges and the final Willberforce Report. A brief account of the day to day progress of the strike can be found in *Labour Research*, April 1972.

¹⁴ Lord Robens, *Ten Year Strife*, 1972, p. 283.

¹⁵ Will Paynter too has just published his reminiscences, *My Generation*, 1972. See pp. 130-2 for his position on unofficial strikes.

¹⁶ *Financial Times*, 28 August 1971.

NUM, and Gormley its President. Although a right-wing member of the Labour Party executive, Gormley needed to prove his credentials against the criticisms of union militants.¹⁷ The Coal Board was taken over by Derek Ezra, a weak figure appointed by a new minister in a new Government. The increasingly restive attitude of the miners, the willingness of the Union leadership to be militant and the combined inexperience of Davies and Ezra resulted in an explosive rupture.

Reasons for the Government's Defeat

The Cabinet miscalculated the miners' strength. It assumed that these workers could be cowed into submission like the postmen. There were parallels. The miners were not overwhelmingly enthusiastic for a strike; a compulsory union ballot showed that less than 60 per cent were in favour. Their Executive is based on the Union's old federal structure, which accentuates divisions between regions (how close these divisions could be, and how disconcerting, Heath was to discover later). Division and lack of enthusiasm were not the only apparent similarities with the UPW. The miners too came from a declining public industry, and, like the UPW, the miners' union was unable to fund strike pay. In addition, just as telephones had been a good substitute for letters, so it was thought that coal stockpiled on the surface would be sufficient to fuel the economy and defeat the strike.

The miners too had compared themselves with the postmen and drawn some lessons. They called for support on the ground and what funds they had were used to help their pickets cover the country. The ruc refused militant assistance. But it agreed that no union member should cross official miners' picket lines. Not that the ruc could have enforced that policy if it had been unpopular but it was not. The miners were vigorously united, mining communities completely solid and mass sympathy was enormous. Even so this would not have won the strike had not the NUM initiated offensive methods. Picket lines were thrown round every power station and coal depot in the country, as well as the mines. An estimated 40,000 miners were deployed in this unprecedented action, and hundreds of students assisted. When police tried to keep open the gates of Saltley stock-pile in Birmingham, there were fights and arrests. On 10 February, Midland engineering workers went on unofficial strike and 10,000 of them, banners flying, voices chanting, converged on the depot. The police took one look and ordered the gates shut. This dramatic battle and smaller ones across the country (one miner was killed by a lorry) increased the men's determination and the support for them. Picketing does not succeed through sheer

¹⁷ Gormley defeated Mick McGahey, a Communist candidate, for the Presidency, but McGahey's call for pay rises of up to 47 per cent was passed by the Union's Annual Conference. The Communist's strategy in the struggles of 1972 cannot be analysed here. The cr and its members consistently played a major role in the events while keeping a maximally low political profile. The two key leaders at uca; James Airlie and Jimmy Reid, the two leading dockers' militants, Bernie Steer and Vic Turner, are all cr members. Likewise the Party dominated the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions which organized the unofficial mobilizations against the Industrial Relations Bill before it became law. The Committee's activities declined sharply when political as opposed to economic issues threatened to dominate its discussions.

strength, although a show of force was essential once publicity had picked out a weakness in the lines. Most often the pickets maintained a nominal guard. Transport men in the Midlands, for example, phoned up the local NUM centre to ask for one or two pickets to go to depots so that they would have reason to turn back. Above all, the railwaymen stopped the coal trains which move the bulk of coal. The miners fought—the working class supported them.

On 10 February, the NUM intimated that it would accept rises of £6 a week for surface workers, £7 for men underground and £4 for the higher paid men at the face. The Board, which originally offered less than £2 in all categories, raised this to an average of £3. But instead of back-dating it, like the previous offer, the Board wanted to pay it out over the next 18 months, which worked out as no increase in the offer at all. Somewhat to the government's perplexity, the union rejected this out of hand. The *Financial Times* editorials revealed how surprised capitalists and Whitehall were at the effectiveness of the strike. The 'distance' which the Cabinet was keeping from mundane wage demands, its over-confidence and rigidity suddenly plunged the country into semi-darkness. Pickets had frozen the stock-piles and as the power stations ran out of their own supplies, their generators shut down. A state of emergency put all industry on a three-day week. There was an uproar of protest from capitalists across the country and stoical acceptance by the bulk of the population, which showed its support for the miners throughout.

When the State of Emergency was declared, a court of inquiry was set up by the Cabinet under Wilberforce. This court reported, as Wilberforce put it, 'with more than usual urgency'. Its three authors first met on a Sunday, candles ready for working into the night. Having studied the situation on Monday, they heard evidence on Tuesday and Wednesday, wrote their conclusions on Thursday and published them on Friday! They offered £5, £6 and £4.50 respectively, an overall increase of 20 per cent. With the spotlight upon them, industry crippled and the government desperate, the NUM Executive debated whether or not to accept the offer. Perhaps Wilberforce envisaged a split Executive voting to accept, with subsequent demoralization among the rank and file. It did split: by one vote it asked for more. The entire Cabinet was hastily convened to say 'no'; its norm already tinsel in the wind. But it conceded that the NUM could come to any agreement it wished with the Coal Board as long as the Wilberforce award on wages was left intact. The Union Executive went round the table, recalled all the expensive irritations that miners had been forced to tolerate for years and abolished them on demand. At the start of the year the press were confident that the miners would be lucky to get 7 per cent; six weeks later they won an award worth nearly 30 per cent.

The power which finally ensured the miners' success came from other workers, especially transport workers. But mass sympathy also played a part. That, as the *Financial Times* put it, was why they won the war. Actually, as the postmen learnt, 'support' in itself is not enough. But it is true that without it the miners would have lost. Why, then, did they gain and keep this sympathy? Their long-held reputation as representa-

tives of certain 'national' virtues may have helped and many who were on the Right backed the miners rather than Heath. But, above all, there were two material reasons: the miners came to symbolize, through their fall in numbers and drop in real income, the impact of unemployment and inflation.

The Railwaymen and the NIRC

Coincidentally the result of the miners' ballot on the agreement was announced on Friday 25 February 1972: 96 per cent of the men accepted it and the following Monday saw a full return to work. On the same day, Heath's new industrial legislation came into full operation. The attempt to impose new legal restraints on working-class militancy occurred at exactly the moment that a union had achieved the greatest upset in British labour history. But the new Minister of Employment, Macmillan, was not unduly worried by the next claim in the pipeline—that of the railwaymen. He was reassured by the fact that transport strikes and go-slows are generally unpopular; they force people to lose pay, restrict their freedom to move, and enrage commuters. In addition, the National Union of Railwaymen's executive is highly conservative. Its General Secretary Sir Sidney Greene is the archetypal trade union 'moderate'. Smartly dressed, with a deady dull monotone voice, he gives the impression that he has only finally agreed to go on living after the most tiresome bout of negotiations. Under Wilson, railwaymen had twice capitulated to pressure from Downing Street. In February 1966, Wilson had stopped a national rail strike only days before it was due by persuading the unions' executive, led by Greene, to capitulate.¹⁸ Eighteen months later Wilson forced ASLEF, the more militant drivers' union, to withdraw its threat of a stoppage. In both cases his intervention ensured that low offers were accepted. Wilson's relative success with the rail unions offered an index for the effectiveness of Heath's approach of relying on the Industrial Relations Act.

The three rail Unions demanded a 14 per cent rise. British Rail upped its offer to 10 per cent, well above the norm. After go-slows and the intervention from Macmillan, both sides went to arbitration. The arbitrator suggested 12½ per cent. The Unions refused the offer. Four months previously this would have been regarded as improbable if not inconceivable; now even the ultra-'responsible' railway leaders felt capable of remaining intransigent. The Government was obliged to turn to its own creation, the NIRC (the new National Industrial Relations Court) for help. The Court agreed to a cooling-off period, but without effect. Two weeks cooling off came and went. Then the Government went back to the NIRC and asked for a ballot. The dispute now turned on only five weeks' back-pay of a rise that both sides had agreed to. The Cabinet apparently expected, at worst, a sixty/forty vote in favour of further industrial action. Its strategists calculated that with so little at stake the men would feel that a strike was not worth while. In

¹⁸ For Harold Wilson's account of this and 'the principles that should regulate intervention by the Prime Minister in an industrial dispute' see his *Personal Record, The Labour Government 1964-70, 1971*, pp. 209-11. For the receiving end of the same incident see R. Bonnar, 'Negotiating at the Top', in R. Fraser, Ed. *Work*, Vol. 2, 1969.

fact the smallness of the difference turned the ballot into a pure test of wills. The result was announced on 31 May 1972.

Bourgeois elections are usually close-run affairs. But, in what was claimed to be the world's biggest-ever industrial postal ballot, the rail workers voted six to one against the Government. Many of the minority who wanted to accept the offer were non-striking staff. 95 per cent of the drivers' union and 88 per cent of the NUR voted for more, along with two out of three non-unionized workers. Having forced a ballot, the authorities had to accept its consequences as did the Unions. Buckton, head of ASLEF, said 'we have been put in a straitjacket. It is going to be rather difficult to do other than what the members want'. British Rail paid up.¹⁹

The Court and the Dockers

The 19 Act had proved of little value in its first use against an official strike, even one led by reluctant and conciliatory negotiators. But the railwaymen had agreed to a ballot, and so co-operated with the new court. The NIRC's existence was thus legitimized even when it was made to look foolish. Subsequently the Transport and General Workers, Britain's largest union, also co-operated. Following a TUC directive not to have anything to do with the NIRC, the RGWU refused to send representatives to two hearings it had been called to and incurred £55,000 fines in contempt. Then the TUC reversed its policy and the RGWU paid these fines (deducting the money from its TUC affiliation fees).

The action brought against the RGWU and some of its members came from *workers* in a warehousing company in Chobham Farm, London, where dockers were blacking lorries, in an attempt to get control of container work. The dockers had lost a third of their total numbers in five years through containerization and by the middle of 1972 there were 2,000 of them on a special unattached register without work and drawing only half pay; they were fighting for jobs. Thus the first two major actions before the NIRC tested in turn official union strength and unofficial militancy. If the Court's authority had proved futile against the first, it was to be disastrously damaged by the second.

The Conservatives had been especially proud of the device in the 19 Act which allowed firms and individuals to sue *unions* for the actions of their *members*; it was almost a positive inducement for small firms to lay their hands on the unions' assets. This particular piece of drafting was designed to force the unions themselves to discipline their members,

¹⁹ If the government were surprised, many socialists were relieved. The experience of such secret ballots prior to the Act coming into force had been extremely negative. The Ford workers' strike through February and March 1971, which overlapped with the end of the Postal Workers' strike and the TUC's mass demonstration against the coming Act, ended in a disastrous secret ballot agreed to by Jones and Scanlon and organized by the company. There was no doubt that the ballot demobilized the men and it was feared at the time that the structural dispersal involved in secret ballots would prove an effective weapon for capital. Perhaps this will continue to be the case where unions and men are openly divided, as at Fords. For details of the voting, how the ballot was swung on the men and the responses to it, see Chapter 6 of John Matthews' concise account of the conflict: *The Ford Strike, the Workers' Story*, 1972. Buckton was quoted in the *Financial Times*, 6 June 1972.

while depriving militants of the chance to be 'martyred' by the law. But the drafting was faulty and the judges now split. Presiding over the Court of Appeal on 13 June 1972, Lord Denning reversed the £55,000 fines and found that the TGWU could not be held responsible for actions which it had opposed.²⁰

He directed that the NIRC should take action against the men, if at all. Stung by this rebuke, Donaldson, who presides over the new court, announced that the three dockers named in the action should appear before him or be jailed for contempt. They were summoned for 16 June, refused to go and 35,000 dockers went on strike. The Government managed to 'save' the situation through the timely appearance of an 'Official Solicitor', a crown officer whose services were certainly never anticipated in the drafting of the Act and of whom few had ever heard. At a time when two of the three dockers, Turner and Steer, both shop stewards, were publicly proclaiming on television and elsewhere that they were picketing and would continue to defy the law, the Official Solicitor told the Court of Appeal that there was *not* sufficient evidence that they were picketing. Lord Denning concurred. The men were not jailed. 'The resources of the law', mused *The Times*, 'are seldom completely exhausted.' Backstage there was anger and embarrassment. The Cabinet immediately decided on a further appeal to the House of Lords, which would take six weeks to meet. Meanwhile, firms could take action against individual workers, the dockers stepped up their blacking, the exchange rate collapsed and on 23 June 1972 the pound was floated.²¹

A Six Week Gap

The NIRC's first moves against unofficial militancy were in a sector where employers were provoking conflicts between groups of workers. But the dockers' most serious weakness was the conflict between them and their major union the TGWU. While the lawyers were arguing with each other the TGWU National Docks Delegates Conference was meeting in London. These 76 delegates from all the country's ports had the power to call and end official dock strikes. Two years earlier they had narrowly defeated the Union's General Secretary, Jack Jones, by 4 votes and implemented a successful three-week strike. This time Jones persuaded them to hold off official action on containerization for six weeks while he and Lord Aldington, head of the Port of London Authority, prepared some recommendations to resolve the conflict.²² Thus two gaps of six weeks coincided. In the docks the country's most independent workforce escalated action which Jones opposed

²⁰ Denning already knew that he, and other judges, could hit the unions when they wanted to. For example, he had confirmed an injunction against the TGWU in the Torquay Hotel Case, 1969.

²¹ In contrast to the conjunctural forces that brought union leaders into open conflict with the government, the unofficial militancy of the dockers is rooted in a century of conflict on the waterfront. Unfortunately there is not room to discuss this here.

²² 'The Aldington-Jones report was conceived at a lunch table early this summer,' *Business Diary*, *The Times*, 28 July 1972. Aldington is well known as one of Heath's few close friends.

but was powerless to prevent, until he came up with proposals of his own. While in the courts, until the House of Lords met, the NIRC could not divert onto the unions legal action taken against militants. With the Government reduced by its own policies to the role of a helpless observer, the way was clear for dockers to directly challenge the law.

An employer gave them the chance. After four weeks, on 17 July, Midland Cold Storage took out writs in the NIRC against five dockers including Turner and Steer, who were blacking their London depot. Behind its disarming name and a nominee shareholding (Paul Foot revealed in *Socialist Worker*), Midland Cold Storage was owned by Vestey's, one of the world's largest meat companies who ship carcasses across the world from their farms in Australia to Dewhursts, the chain of butchers they control in England. The Prime Minister, less well informed, exemplified Midlands as a small enterprise in the grip of trade-union monopoly power. In fact Vestey's were taking work away from their dockland storage centres and using cheaper, non-dock labour.

The day that the Midland's action was announced, Tuesday 18 July, was a turning point. In Downing Street, Heath was now really under pressure. For the first time he met the TUC and CBI leaderships together. They agreed on the need for 'sensible and constructive arrangements'. Such platitudes seemed to confirm prevalent opinion among the big bourgeoisie that the trade unions would co-operate if conciliated. It had found Heath's confrontationism and refusal to intervene futile and expensive; now his apparent willingness to appease the unions at last appeared to promise a real change in course. These disagreements had become public at the time of Denning's Appeal judgment, but they had been simmering ever since Heath took office. *The Times* and other papers called for an incomes policy as soon as the Conservatives were elected. Catherwood, ex-head of the National Economic Development Council, who now runs Laing's, a major construction company, expressed a similar view when he retired from the Civil Service, in May 1971. He demanded, 'a voluntary incomes policy in which support is won by discussion'. From the beginning of the year, at the Confederation of British Industry's initiative, the TUC and the CBI had been having talks, while as early as October 1971, the Home Secretary and *de facto* Deputy Prime Minister Reginald Maudling first drafted for the Cabinet a memorandum on an incomes policy. After the confrontation with the miners, opinion was summed up by the political correspondent of the *Financial Times* who weighed the pros and cons of a General Strike and concluded: 'most of the leaders on both sides realize that this kind of "simple" solution, far from clearing the air, might divide the nation more deeply than at any time since, perhaps, 1688, and that whoever won, it might take generations to clear up the mess.'²³ Most of the leaders on both sides . . . the exception was still the Prime Minister.

On the same day that the Midland's action was publicized and Heath began to give way, the Home Secretary decided to speak out openly for a new approach. In an extraordinary move Maudling published in *The*

²³ *Financial Times*, 9 June 1972.

Times an attack on the government's policy, thinly veiled as a 'letter to his constituents'. He concluded: '... in a democracy government is only possible by the general consent of the governed. They may complain, dispute, compete; conflict is essential to progress. But unless there is a general will that from the conflict and dispute a measure of consensus will emerge, I do not see how democracy can survive.' This desire for consensus was the dominant mood within the ruling class. Yet, despite this, Maudling had blundered badly. His attempts to provide his fellows with a philosophy foundered just like his efforts to make a personal fortune. 'The Hegelian process', he informed his startled readers, 'of thesis, antithesis and synthesis still sets the pattern for the development of our society.' Suitably, Maudling was named in a bankruptcy proceeding and, not without his own sense of the Hegelian moment, Heath purged his potential successor the day the article was published.

'The Times' Loses its Temper

That was a Tuesday. On the Friday the five dockers named by Midlands were jailed for refusing to go to the NRC. Unofficial strikes again halted dock work and began to spread to other plants. This time the 'Official Solicitor' was not on hand. *The Times* reacted violently. Sacking Maudling and jailing dockers was not what it expected. It prayed for the 'unknown internal processes' which alone could 'reverse the locks on the Prime Minister's will'. It pleaded for an 'effective incomes policy'. It insisted that 'if there has to be real bargaining between the Government and the unions, then wage inflation is what it should be about'. It murmured angrily about Heath's character and was bitter at Maudling's dismissal. 'The Prime Minister is a remote and unintelligible figure to the great majority of the public, to many of his colleagues in Parliament and no doubt even to some of his colleagues in the Cabinet. He takes discussion for criticism, criticism for disloyalty and disloyalty for high treason. In his administration he has lost able men through misfortune and gained mediocrities through choice.' Finally, *The Times* began to make threats: casting around for anyone who could credibly replace Heath and finding a blank as far as the Cabinet was concerned it demanded the recall of Sir Christopher Soames from Paris (since when his appointment in Brussels has been confirmed). The message was clear enough. In the middle of the sharpest class conflict since the General Strike of 1926, with five dockers in jail, unofficial strikes spreading, and the RUC about to decide what it would do, *The Times* was ready, if necessary, to call for Heath to go.²⁴

On Monday 24 July, dockers marched on Pentonville prison, where the five were jailed; the AUEW called for a one-day engineering strike the following Monday the 31st, the last remaining powerful unions on the trade union register deregistered—an important blow against the Government—and the national press was closed down as the print workers went on strike. On Wednesday the General Council of the RUC called for a national strike on the 31st if the dockers were still inside. Since 1926 the idea of a General Strike had been unthinkable in these quarters.

²⁴ *The Times*, 22 July 1972.

But the six weeks were up. The same Wednesday, 26 July, the House of Lords ruled that the row's fine was legal, which meant that the Union, not the men themselves, was responsible for the action of the five. Once more the Official Solicitor was wheeled in and the five emerged in triumph on the shoulders of their comrades. Had the ruc pressed home its advantage it could have struck against the fines as well. But it at least was going to act with caution; there was no general strike.

Simultaneously Aldington and Jones came through with their joint recommendations, which they made appear inviting. The dockers would not be bought as easily as the ruc and, with large-scale abstentions, the delegates' conference rejected the report and made the unofficial strike official; it was to continue for 20 days. At the end of the hectic week *The Times* concluded: 'Yes, we are in danger.' It declared that 'Britain's sophisticated faith in conventional conduct was threatened. What was wrong was that the Industrial Relations Act put outside any political control an industrial situation which could produce a General Strike. A little company started the prosecution; five agitators saw the chance to be heroes; a judge sent them inside. At no point was there an opportunity for the Government to intervene . . . the Government were quite wrong to put it completely out of their own power to affect so critical a situation, and it was a serious legislative error to do so'.²⁵

The Times can be highly idiosyncratic, but its general line over the last few years has been implemented, often despite the Government of the day, not because of the paper's power but because its function is to reflect the political interests and the hegemonic instincts of the ruling class. Hence the authority of its attacks on a Conservative administration. A week after the dockers had been released, the paper provided its readers with a third massive editorial headlined 'How the Law Should Be Changed'. It was drafted with a degree of technical fluency that made some suspect the hand of Lords Denning or Devlin, and it demanded that the IR Act be revised, to stop the law being used as a provocative weapon in petty struggles.²⁶

Meanwhile in the Docks

Meanwhile in the docks, Heath's friend, Lord Aldington, and Jack Jones rubbed the lesson home by showing what could be done with skill and money—and without the Act. They suggested that every man over 55 who offered to leave the docks by February 1973 should get £4,000 and that the government should foot the bill. They calculated that the 2,000 men on the temporary unattached register would disappear and the register could be safely abolished. There were other

²⁵ *The Times*, 28 July 1972. This could have been predicted. *Seven Days*, which folded in March, commented on the consequences of the new law before it came into operation: 'Because of Heath's obsession with keeping the government out of capitalism's twists and turns, the Industrial Relations Act gives blanket powers to private parties to take unions to court. This will turn out to bring the government into future struggles even more deeply and with even worse consequences for itself than the haggling that Wilson indulged in when he was Prime Minister', 23 February 1972 (emphasis in original).

²⁶ *The Times*, 3 August 1972.

promises as well. With only minimal additions, their proposal was resubmitted to the delegates' conference which voted 53 to 30 to accept it and return to work. Those who voted against came from the bigger ports and represented more dockers, but as delegates they were outnumbered. Outside Transport House militants lost their tempers, some delegates were roughed up, while Jones himself was attacked verbally and had water thrown at him. At the mass meeting which followed the delegates' conference, the London dockers, hostile to the brawling outside the Union's headquarters, listened to Bernie Steer advise them that the agreement was not watertight and should not be accepted. They heard him out but voted overwhelmingly to go along with the conference's recommendation.

The docks dispute finally forced Heath to change course. His strategy of 'negative' withdrawal had been broken by militant union action (the miners). Then, any hopes that the new Act would prove impregnable were in turn shattered when it was turned against the Government by non-militant action (the railwaymen). Now the Court was aggravating unofficial militancy (the dockers). Heath's allies were demanding new policies, while Aldington showed how 'positive' intervention could defeat militants—with the help of trade-union leaders.

Already columnists have begun to speculate over which summer day Heath 'changed his mind'. But as early as August 1971 four highly placed men, Sir Frank Figgures, Catherwood's successor at the National Economic Development Council, Vic Feather of the ruc, Campbell Adamson of the cbr and Sir Douglas Allen, the senior civil servant at the Treasury, were preparing the way for a change in policy. On 4 July 1972, Heath saw ruc representatives and they discussed conciliation. The dockers had shown something else was needed, the ruc made it clear that a new policy was possible. Sir William Armstrong, head of the Civil service, who works from the Prime Minister's office, joined the 'group of four'. On the 18th of that month the first meeting between the Government, the ruc and the cbr took place.

The Tripartite Talks

There were nine rounds of tripartite talks—the last in November. The first three were lightweight affairs lasting an average of 2 hours. The next three lasted an average of about 6 hours each and were held at the Prime Minister's country retreat. There, the elements of a package deal were outlined. The final three sessions were highly sensationalized meetings which ended in a Government manoeuvre that made the ruc seem responsible for the final breakdown.

The centrepiece of the package deal was a dramatic offer from Heath of a £2 a week rise for everyone, with price rises kept down to an overall 5 per cent increase and 5 per cent growth in the economy. This vivid and easy-to-grasp flat-rate increase for everyone, with a 'threshold agreement' for additions in case of extra inflation, would indeed raise the real level of pay for the low paid, just. The majority of workers would probably hold their own, while capitalists would do very well.

'Good for Profits' was the *Economist's* headline, and it calculated that the share of the national income going to profits would rise from 12 to 14 or even 16 per cent.²⁷ As proposed, the package meant an overall redistribution of wealth in favour of profits and a redistribution within the working class in favour of the lower paid. Ironically enough, the idea had actually come from Harold Wilson. In his 7-point 'Cure for Inflation', published in early August,²⁸ directing his remarks explicitly to the talks, he called for 'the replacement of uniform percentage increases by uniform cash increases', in addition to a threshold linked to inflation. The group of four, now five, passed on this idea in a 'discussion document' to the first Chequers talks on 14 September. On the 26th Heath made the idea his own. Such is the pay-off of a two-party system.

It was evident that, although the government had 'at last' got the initiative, further concessions would be needed to get an agreement with the unions. The TUC representatives said they wanted control of food prices and rents as well as higher pensions, a bigger flat-rate increase, and of course substantial changes in the IR Act—an aim by this time largely shared by British big capital.

Conciliation: Heath-style

In his 1970 Election Manifesto Heath had written: 'Our theme is to replace Labour's restrictions with Conservative incentives. We utterly reject the philosophy of compulsory wage control.' Now, having overcome its resistance to the idea of intervention, the Cabinet discussed a total reversal of policy. Officials were sent post haste across the Atlantic to study Nixon's new economic policy; for suspicions remained that, even with an agreement, the unions would not be able to sell it to their membership. The *Financial Times'* senior columnist Samuel Brittan crystallized thinking here. In an article headlined 'The Dangers of the Corporate State' he argued: 'At first sight a voluntary agreement could not appear more reasonable. But, on reflection, is it really the job of trade unions to restrain wages, or of employers to keep down prices? This is the job of trade unions in the Soviet bloc... (But) they cannot represent *and* police their members without being unsuccessful at one or both of these tasks; and it would be difficult to invent a better way of transmitting power to the militants at shop-floor level.' Brittan concluded: 'If the Heath proposals are part of a strategy designed to shift opinion prior to a statutory policy, the approach would be understandable.'²⁹

Probably Heath wanted an agreement with the unions provided it was cheap enough. But, as the TUC began negotiating, the advantages of a statutory freeze to be followed by government-directed policies grew—provided that the unions did not break with the government. First the union asked for guarantees on food prices; the Cabinet refused unless there was agreement to statutory control of wages. Yet afterwards, Vic

²⁷ The *Economist*, 30 September 1972.

²⁸ Harold Wilson, 'My Cure for Inflation', *Sunday Times*, 6 August 1972.

²⁹ *Financial Times*, 19 October 1972.

Feather, Secretary of the ruc, stated: 'We tried all ways to compromise,' and added lamely, 'we were prepared, provided the rest of the package was right, to agree that these controls should be purely voluntary.'³⁰ Faced with the unions' willingness to enter into a non-watertight agreement, the government had to say what it would offer. Earlier Heath had challenged the ruc to continue 'negotiating'. Now, when he outlined his proposals, they were no different from his original suggestions. Any change in government policies, from pensions to the IR Act, were ruled out. He would listen to suggestions but would decide unilaterally. Later the Prime Minister informed the nation that the talks 'were not a bargaining session'. So much for negotiations. Feather, Greene, Jones and Scanlon and even Cooper, head of the gmwu, all agreed that the government had put an end to the talks. The day before the ruc itself had presented an eminently negotiable set of proposals and kept them from the press and television 'in order not to prejudice the discussions'. The six ruc negotiators spent an afternoon and evening talking to themselves inside No. 10 while Heath and his advisers decided what to do. The 'talks' were then postponed for a day, Heath held a Cabinet meeting and the ruc's representatives returned to hear the government's 'proposal' which ended the discussions. The ruc team stayed on for dinner, missed the evening papers and in the morning the headlines announced that they had 'turned down' the Government's 'offer'. The ruc was outmanoeuvred, while Heath's popularity rating, at least for the moment, was enhanced by his appearing to be 'fair'.³¹

The union leaders were unable to refuse discussions with the Government. Jones declared after the talks had broken down: 'We are prepared to talk and negotiate in the best interests of the British people because we are as British as anyone who claims to be, from any other quarter.'³² But for the same reasons they could not denounce the Cabinet for refusing further discussions with them; either course would have meant being 'political'. Thus the unions were back in their usual position of talking to the government while gaining nothing from doing so. This is the essence of consensus politics in industrial relations.

Paradoxically the Government-initiated collapse of the tripartite talks was the real beginning of Heath's new policies. The trade unions were blamed, but Government spokesmen emphasized the good faith of the

³⁰ *Financial Times*, 4 November 1972.

³¹ This view of the talks is not the official one. Peter Jay wrote that their breakdown was a result of 'bad communication and misunderstanding' (*The Times*, 9 November 1972). Doubtless the Government wants this to be believed, as it helps it impose a freeze without losing union co-operation. But the Institute of Director's official monthly told its readers, 'If Mr Heath had been prepared to sacrifice one of his main political aims—on housing or rents, for instance—he would almost certainly have secured an agreement with the ruc . . . (but he) agreed with his advisors. Therefore the final package he offered the ruc was one which inevitably invited a collapse of the talks.' ('Prospero', *The Director* December 1972). It should be noted that the capitalist paper with the clearest grasp of the negotiations confidently asserts that the ruc would have capitulated in return for limited concessions.

³² *Financial Times*, 9 November 1972. Earlier Jones and Scanlon had hurried along into a secret meeting with leading capitalists and the Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace—exposed in a classic scoop by *Workers Press*, 2 November 1972.

representatives of labour and the Cabinet's desire to continue consultations.³³ Meanwhile it imposed a Nixon-style freeze and started considering guidelines and limits for wage agreements for its Stage 2, post-freeze policies—including, yet again, setting up machinery for overseeing prices and incomes: Heath had turned full circle.

2 Heathism Reconsidered

As the preceding narrative has shown, Heath came to power determined to reverse the trend of government-labour relations which had grown up since the war and which accelerated under Wilson. Despite some initial victories, he soon found himself threatened with a Pandora's box which, once opened, could not be closed. Not only had he provoked the trade unions into unwonted militancy, he also found himself in danger of being isolated within his own class bloc. With considerable reluctance he was forced to return to a variant of Wilson's strategy. We can now follow the above outline of Heath's first clashes with the working class³⁴ by a reconsideration of the basic elements of this aspect of his domestic policy and the reasons for its failure.

In a pioneering article in *NLR* 70, written at the beginning of the Heath regime, Robin Blackburn made the first and still the only serious Marxist analysis of the relative originality of the Heath Government's 'New Course for British Capitalism'. He correctly predicted the probability of explosive proletarian reaction to it. At the same time he showed that Heath's 'toughness' was not aimed at constructing a corporate neo-fascist state, but rather at rejuvenating Britain as a European power unencumbered by the pseudo-postures of Commonwealth, 'special relationships'. His article grasped the unity of Heath's foreign and home policies.

But it also reflected an inability to differentiate the two. Discussing Heath's overall policies Blackburn wrote: 'In formulating a strategy for restoring the fortunes of British capitalism, he intends to jettison the backwardness of British bourgeois politics—its sentimentalism about old friends and customs—and to exploit the backwardness of the British working class—its parliamentarianism and economism.' But towards the end of his article he concludes: 'It seems that the core of Heath's policy in this area (the economic struggle) is to use

³³ The inflexibility of the RA Act simply became an embarrassment; a measure of this can be gained from the Parliamentary debate on the wave of one-day strikes by engineering workers against fines imposed on the AUEW over the case of Goad, a blackleg who used the NIRC to try and re-join the Union. Only 15 MRA, 2 per cent of the total, attended to debate a national strike against a High Court fine. According to the *Financial Times* (19 December 1972), 'The debate sunk to shouts of "shut up" and "rubbish"'. Labour MP attacked the Act but supported obedience to the law and Conservatives found it hard to disagree. Meanwhile working class strength was being dissipated by the AUEW's failure to give a clear lead to its membership and the right wing in the Union gained ground. In the end Goad's employers 'decided quietly to give (him) a golden handshake of about £5,000', according to the *Economist*, 20 January 1973.

³⁴ There has only been space to mention strikes with outstanding political consequences. There were many others in a period of record industrial action including an official construction workers strike, at first on a selective basis, that lasted nearly three months.

the political strength of the British bourgeoisie *vis à vis* its working class to liquidate its economic weakness.' Both of these concise statements were true, as was the contradiction between them: Heath regarded the bourgeoisie as simultaneously backward and strong. Actually he confused its methods, which are not weak, with its global position, which was. Heath treated these two distinct aspects as if they were one. He drove the country into the Common Market and broke with the foreign policy of Churchill, Eden and Macmillan. But he also broke with the clubby atmosphere which his predecessors had cultivated in Downing Street and which Wilson so carefully continued. While this style of politics had cut little ice abroad, it had been effective at home, at least in relation to organized labour. For it had defused and weakened union power. Far from being a liability, many other ruling classes coveted it with jealousy. Heath's actions were double edged: the same blade that cut a path into the Common Market threatened to mow down the *modus vivendi* at home as giant firms crashed to bankruptcy and right-wing trade unionists led successful strikes. That is why *The Times* suggested that Heath was 'Both the best and the worst Conservative Prime Minister we have ever had'.³⁵

The 1970 Conservative government faced the same problem that had broken the preceding Labour and Conservative administrations: the international weakness of British capitalism. There can be little doubt that, as Blackburn and Nairn argued, entry into the EEC and emancipation from American tutelage was the most rational long-term choice for the British ruling class, economically and politically.

But Heath forced the country into the community of the living with the ideology of the dead. The still wind of 'free enterprise' led not to invigoration but panic. To take one example, by withdrawing direct investment grants for the regions and substituting tax concessions, the Conservatives liquidated all incentive for industry to invest in the development areas and all such investment ceased.³⁶ These errors were soon impressed on the Cabinet and, as it handed out huge tax and monetary concessions to reflate the economy, the rationality of direct subsidies became overwhelming. By May 1972 the Industries Act earmarked £1,000 million to help companies invest.

An overall survey of Heath's government would need to examine these changes of policy more closely; this analysis, however, concentrates on the consequences of Heath's policies for capital/labour relations. Here, Heath miscalculated even more seriously and led his class into defeats. But, although workers tasted victory in 1972, the central issue still remains that of how, not whether, bourgeois state power will be extended into the arena of industrial conflicts: while trade

³⁵ *The Times*, 22 July 1972.

³⁶ H. H. Scholfield and J. R. Franks have shown that the initial elimination of cash grants 'virtually eradicated the advantages of investing in development areas' and commented, 'The Government, we believe, are not aware of the effects of the changes they have made.' 'Investment Incentives and Regional Policy', *National Westminster Bank Quarterly Review*, February 1972.

unionists successfully defended themselves, they did not gain the upper hand.

Inflation and Profits: the Legacy of Wilson

At the time of the miners' strike, inflation was running at nearly 10 per cent a year. Even when the rate temporarily declined, its impact was harsh on the working population. In August 1972, when the overall rate was down to 6.6 per cent a year, bread, meat, fish, vegetables, housing and shoes were all increasing in double figures. Large poor families spend 40 per cent of their budget on food, as against 16 per cent for well off single persons, and essentials compose far more of their diet.³⁷ The consequence has been that their food bill has risen twice as fast, and the impact of inflation on their incomes has been four times as great.

In this context it is not surprising that the bonanza of speculative winnings in the property market has been a focal point of resentment. Huge fortunes were amassed from capital gains, accumulated by letting buildings stand empty as their market value soared. The price of new houses rose by 37 per cent in two years (1970-2) while that of second-hand ones increased by 45 per cent. It is well known that in capitalist societies, private housing is more expensive for the poor than for any other class. In London, immigrants are earning under £20 a week and spending over half of it on squalid furnished rooms.

TABLE I
International comparison of annual rates of inflation in consumer prices

	1960-5	1965-8	1969	1970	1971
Canada	1.6	3.8	4.5	3.4	5.0
France	3.8	3.3	6.4	5.3	6.0
Germany	2.8	2.3	2.7	3.8	5.8
Italy	4.9	2.3	2.6	5.0	4.7
Japan	6.2	4.8	5.2	7.7	4.6
United Kingdom	3.6	3.7	5.5	6.4	9.0
United States	1.3	3.3	5.4	5.9	3.4

SOURCE: *Banker*, May 1972, p. 597.

Table I shows that Britain had a steadily high (but *not* abnormal) rate of inflation which only increased dramatically in 1971. This is not the place for a discussion of the international trend, fuelled in turn by the deficit financing of the Vietnam war and the expansion of the Eurodollar market. However the British economy was less able to absorb inflation than others. There was little increase in productivity to compensate and while prices and wages rose, investment stagnated. The crushing July measures in 1966 and the switch of resources after devaluation in 1967 partly account for this. The slow turn around in the balance of payments after devaluation, now known to be a normal 'J'

³⁷ The *Economist*, 14 October and 11 November 1972. The *Daily Mirror* instituted a 'Shopping Clock' in November 1970 and bought a standard bag of groceries for £5.00. By the end of 1972 the hand had turned nearly one and a half times to read £6.37½ for the same goods. *Daily Mirror*, 30 December 1972.

curve,³⁸ gave the International Monetary Fund, the country's main creditor, the chance to demand further measures. It obliged Labour's Chancellor, Roy Jenkins, to impose huge tax increases and a further credit squeeze. *The Banker* ruefully recalled 'The compound medicine cured the sickness but it nearly killed the patient'.³⁹ In an ageing infrastructure, profits were restricted by international competition on the one hand and trade union action to maintain living standards on the other. The rate of return on capital flattened out to 6.8 per cent as against 10-11 per cent for the decade up to 1965.

Profits were further reduced when Wilson encouraged high wage settlements in an attempt to win the 1970 election. The Conservative MP whom Labour recruited to run the Prices and Incomes Board, Aubrey Jones, wrote of this tactic: 'I had seen at least two Conservative governments deliberately encourage inflation in an attempt to facilitate the re-election of the party on which they were based . . . I was to live to see the Labour Government of 1966-70 do much the same.'⁴⁰ However Labour's pre-election budgets were cautious; indeed it boasted that they were not give-aways. Nevertheless, their legacy too was dramatic. Turner and Wilkinson have demonstrated the crucial effect of general taxation on the level of wage increases. Jenkins' heavy taxes forced trade unions to raise their wage demands towards double figures as low paid workers could lose entire wage increases through taxation and loss of benefits. Glyn and Sutcliffe reckon that, 'to get a mere one-per-cent increase in their living standards (in 1971), might require rises in money earnings of 12 to 15 per cent'.⁴¹ By the end of its term Labour finally secured what it had been determined to achieve from its first day of office—a strong balance of payments. The cost was a weak and exhausted economy, an impatient and disillusioned electorate, rising prices and spiralling wage demands.

Nevertheless, as table 1 shows, the Heath administration did not inherit a rate of inflation that was abnormal by European standards. Nor was the militancy of the British labour movement anything statistically exceptional. In the forty years following the General Strike of 1926, the British strike rate was modest. For twenty of those years (1934-54) there had been no national strike in any industry. For the decade that followed unofficial militancy grew into a serious but limited force. By the mid-sixties, out of 16 major capitalist countries, Britain was 13th in the average number of people involved in a strike, 9th in terms of average duration and in relation to total workforce, 6th in the number of stoppages and 8th in days lost. In other words it was about average.⁴² Finally, as table II shows, the increase in strikes from 1968 to 1971 was part of an international trend.

³⁸ With devaluation the price of imports rises immediately while the competitive effects of this rise and the lower price of exports take time to work through. Thus the short term result of devaluation is to increase the balance of payments deficit which it is designed to eradicate.

³⁹ *The Banker*, January 1972.

⁴⁰ In his Introduction to Joan Mitchell's *The National Board for Prices and Incomes*, 1972.

⁴¹ Frank Wilkinson and H. A. Turner, 'The Wage-tax spiral and labour militancy' in *Do Trade Unions Cause Inflation?* 1972, and A. Glyn and B. Sutcliffe, *British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze*, p. 191.

⁴² *Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations 1965-68*, (Cmd 2623) —The Donovan Report—p. 95.

TABLE II
International comparison of days lost per 1000 workers
through industrial disputes

	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	Average for 5 years 1962-6
Australia	280	300	460	390	340	354
Belgium	160	140	250	40	320	182
Canada	590	330	560	790	1,570	768
Denmark	30	40	30	400	30	106
Finland	30	1,410	80	20	150	358
France	220	770	280	100	240	522
West Germany	30	140	—	—	—	34
India	500	240	560	470	890	532
Ireland	320	760	1,620	1,720	1,420	1,168
Italy	2,270	1,150	1,270	540	1,710	1,388
Japan	350	180	190	360	170	250
Netherlands	—	20	20	30	10	16
New Zealand	250	160	160	50	230	170
Norway	130	360	—	—	—	98
Sweden	—	10	10	—	110	26
United Kingdom	440	140	170	220	170	228
United States	730	630	850	860	880	790

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	Average for 5 years 1967-71
Australia	300	440	810	990	1,250	758
Belgium	90	250	100	840	700	392
Canada	1,200	1,670	2,550	2,180	800	1,680
Denmark	20	20	80	170	30	64
Finland	410	250	200	280	5,320	892
France	430	(a)	200	190	430	312(b)
West Germany	30	—	20	10	330	78
India	1,270	1,150	1,270	1,560	920	1,234
Ireland	520	910	2,150	480	660	944
Italy	580	930	4,110	1,500	920	1,608
Japan	100	160	200	200	310	194
Netherlands	—	10	10	140	50	42
New Zealand	320	310	300	470	350	350
Norway	10	10	—	70	10	20
Sweden	—	—	30	40	240	62
United Kingdom	220	370	520	740	1,130	596
United States	1,430	1,590	1,390	2,220	1,610	1,648

Where no figure is given the number of days lost per 1,000 persons employed is less than five.

(a) Figures not available.

(b) Average for 1967 and 1968-71 only.

SOURCE: *Department of Employment Gazette*, October 1972, p. 899.

NOTE: Two major industrial countries, France and Japan, do not show an increase in their average annual incidence of days lost between 1962-6 and 1967-71. But the statistics for France omit May/June 1968 when the figures simply went off the charts. In Japan, Table III shows that hourly earnings there rose by 101 per cent between 1967-71; while in 1972 it had an extended seamen's strike. The effect of just one strike on the annual figures can be remarkable. The miners' strike meant 10.8 million days lost in Britain, nearly equal to the total for 1971 as a whole. Accordingly, the figure for days lost in 1972 will be doubled and the UK will probably move to the top of the league, from 4th in 1971 and 7th in 1970.

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Wages and Productivity

The same is true of wages. Until 1972 wage rates grew at a slower pace in Britain than in the Common Market or Japan. The *Economist's* editorials echoing the received opinion of the day have consistently attacked 'inflationary wage settlements', but by September 1972 the opening paragraph of its supplement on the City referred to 'the inflation foolishly permitted by the authorities'. This referred to the money supply, not the miners' strike. Later still, discussing the Downing Street negotiations between the government, unions and industry it commented: '*After all, it has been Britain's failure of productivity rather than on wages which has made us more inflation prone than other countries*'. This is indeed the case.⁴³

It was wage costs per unit of output that rose disproportionally in the UK. This can be clearly seen in table III which covers the five years from the 1967 devaluation to the floating of the pound. Column 4, for example, shows that hourly earnings in Britain rose by 6 per cent less than those in France, but unit costs went up by half as much again. Neither the general rate of inflation (until 1971), nor the rate of increase in strikes was exceptional in international terms, but the slow growth in productivity, real incomes and investment was. It was this weakness, the comparative weakness of British capital, not the relative strength of the British working class, that constituted the real crisis point.⁴⁴

TABLE III
Increase in manufacturing export prices and wage costs 1967-72

	Export prices in US dollars			Hourly Earnings	Wage costs per unit of output
	Mid-67 to Mid-70	Mid-70 to 1st qu 72	Mid-67 to 1st qu 72	Mid-67 to 1st qu 72	Mid-67 to 4th qu 71
	%	%	%	%	%
France	5	9	14	64	18
Germany	12	16	30	53	21
Italy	10	12	23	62	32
Japan	12	9	29	101	23
United Kingdom	0	26	26	58	27
United States	15	4	18	51	15

SOURCE: *Economist*, 1 July 1972, p. 88.

But Heath's initial policies diminished industrial investment while they exacerbated inflation and provoked militancy, encouraging battles that he subsequently lost. Tables I and III show how inflation suddenly moved ahead of the UK's continental rivals with the advent of the Heath regime. In the Autumn of 1970, in the Government's first 'mini' budget, deflationary cuts in social spending scared off investment.

⁴³ The *Economist*, 23 September 1972, and 4 November 1972 (my italics).

⁴⁴ It is necessary to stress this as Glyn and Sutcliffe, in their important and highly informative book (*op. cit.*), argue that international competition and the local strength of labour are mainly responsible for the decline of profits in the UK. Thus they tend to see the basic *national* factor in the crisis of British capitalism as working class militancy. Comparative analysis has yet to validate this view.

Then the money supply was increased; at the end of that year it was rising at the rate of 10 per cent per annum; by 1972 it achieved a rate of increase equivalent to an annual rise of 30 per cent, a 'panic rate' according to *The Banker*.⁴⁵ For the five quarters from February 1971 to May 1972 borrowing in the finance and personal sectors (i.e. property and speculation) doubled from £2,170 million to £4,406 million, while investment in manufacturing through 1971 fell by 7.7 per cent⁴⁶. With the level of real output at a standstill and the money supply ballooning, rapid inflation was inevitable. In 1972 the level of investment in manufacturing, the key to the viability of the economy and its potential for long term expansion, was still falling. Only at the end of the year were there unmistakable signs of future increase in investment in the manufacturing sector. Even this was hesitantly forecast despite a rise in profits over 1972 of 17 per cent. As the balance of payments slumped into deficit, experts viewed the prospects for sustained growth with increasing pessimism.

Inflation: Heath's Contribution

In Cecil King's invaluable diary, the entry for 12 February 1969 reads: 'Lunch with Ted Heath . . . he spoke of his intentions to close down the Prices and Incomes Board and (the) Commission on Industrial Relations: he continues to think that wages can be kept in control by monetary means'.⁴⁷ This is a damaging revelation: it shows that the widely-held suspicion that the Government was deliberately encouraging price rises by expanding the money supply was partly correct. The Cabinet encouraged inflation for two reasons. Price rises were, and are, an inevitable consequence of joining the Common Market; the Conservatives calculated that raising them prior to entry and well before an election would diminish the impact of joining and increase its political acceptability. Secondly, there was Heath's determination to release controls and 'free' the economy, which included, as he confided to Cecil King, a monetarist attack on wages. But, after the Labour recession, British capitalism tended to cut back investment even more, instead of responding aggressively. As the number of bankruptcies accelerated and unemployment mounted, the Conservatives rushed out huge, regressive, tax cuts and a wild increase in the money supply. By initially depriving themselves of the powers to intervene and direct this reflation, much of it was squandered in a bonanza on the property market and general price rises which weakened the economy's international position, well before there was any increase in productive capacity. Thus Heath's first policies, apart from entry to the EEC, weakened British capitalism and antagonized much of the electorate—the opposite of a rational bourgeois strategy.

Just as Heath's monetarist policies accentuated inflation and the problem of under-investment, so his labour legislation worsened industrial relations—which were already inflamed by rising prices. Heath's

⁴⁵ *The Banker*, November 1972.

⁴⁶ Figures from *London and Cambridge Economic Bulletin*, quoted in *The Times*, 27 June 1972.

⁴⁷ *The Cecil King Diary*, 1972, p. 240. At the time King controlled the *Daily Mirror*.

determination to take a 'firm line', relying on market forces and introducing a far-reaching Industrial Relations Act, might seem strange given the modest and unexceptional level of labour militancy. But, although party leaders are often prisoners of their own electoral demagoguery and debts to certain factions of their supporters, there was a general consensus among political leaders of all parties that *some* form of state action was needed. It is necessary to see why this was so before seeing where Heath went wrong.

The Specificity of British Trade Unionism

The fundamental strength of the British working class, lies in its network of shop stewards throughout industry. The effort to contain and harness this force was a necessary part of the post-war modernization of British capitalism. Britain has a centralized and unified trade union movement with a high proportion of the workforce organized. Conservatism has been the concomitant of this centralism; there are few of the mass, cross-industry strikes of the politically divided French and Italian union movements. In key sectors, however, grass roots militancy and national unionism grew together. More important, neither trade unions nor companies reorganized their methods after the Second World War. As a consequence, agreements at plant level between a maturing shop steward movement and patriarchal managers began to predominate. According to the Donovan Report, the Royal Commission on these matters set up by the Labour Government, by the mid-sixties 'the consequences of bargaining within the factory can be more momentous than those of industry-wide agreements'.⁴⁸ The structural problem for British capitalism in its efforts to keep wages down was that in whole areas, especially in engineering, both companies and trade unions had lost control of wage bargaining.

Donovan listed three reasons: first of all, the amateurism of management—'many companies have no effective personnel policy to control methods of negotiation and pay structures, and perhaps no conception of one'⁴⁹; secondly, multi-unionism, which prevented effective bargaining by full-time union officers (four out of five trade unionists work in multi-union establishments); finally, 'restrictive' practices. Shop-floor strength as well as the low level of investment (new processes are essential for reconstituting work procedures) conserved an informal, 'unconstitutional', plant-by-plant collusion between factory managements, foremen and shop stewards throughout large sectors of industry.

The Donovan Report calculated that backward management, multi-unionism and a strong shop stewards' movement could all be overcome by 'sound collective bargaining machinery' of factory agreements codified by an official 'Industrial Relations Commission', and a majority advised against direct industrial legislation. The structural backwardness of British labour relations, it should be added, was less acute than the backwardness in level of management and senior

⁴⁸ Donovan Report, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

personnel. When Wilson took office, for example, there were only 23 graduates employed in the whole machine tools industry⁵⁰—an eloquent indictment of a country that lives by exporting manufactured products.

The need for state assistance to modernize the workings of British capitalism was reinforced at a second level by the need for an incomes policy; for agreed targets of investment, prices and wages, particularly in a context of relatively full employment. The first level of intervention involved modernization of industry itself, this second level necessitated overall planning. Both were national problems.

In addition there was a third, localized contradiction. This was the peculiarly high rate of strikes and conflicts in some vital industrial sectors. British strikes have had a very specific pattern. Overwhelmingly unofficial, they are endemic in some sectors, while in others workers tend never to go on strike at all; proletarian militancy has an uneven development.

The Uneven Development of Industrial Militancy

In the mid-sixties, mining, construction, engineering and docks accounted for three-quarters of all unofficial strikes. Two specialists who opposed the RA Act and argue for a 'piecemeal solution' claim that 'the centre of British strike activity is to be found in the "key" industries serving export markets'.⁵¹ It is true that since the war there have been 17 major dock strikes; central bankers may be unimpressed by the overall statistical normalcy of UK strike rates if they think that trade with Britain is subject to exceptional disruption. In the motor industry, another major export sector, linked production means that small strikes can cause widespread stoppages. Wilson, in particular, worked up concern over these actions and they were a major factor in the creation of an anti-union political climate. Nevertheless, they remained a peripheral problem with specific causes.⁵²

Wilson himself seemed to recognize this when he tried to introduce labour legislation in 1969. This was primarily designed to win electoral support, since polls showed that anti-trade union legislation was popular. But his proposal was not far-reaching. He writes in his memoirs: 'Following a hint Victor Feather had given me in a private talk the previous evening, I repeated Barbara Castle's invitation to the TUC themselves to act to deal with the two main problems with which we were concerned; namely, inter-union disputes in their various forms, and unconstitutional stoppages',⁵³ i.e. strictly secondary matters.

⁵⁰ Harold Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵¹ T. Whittingham and B. Towers, 'Strikes and the Economy', *The National Westminster Bank Quarterly Review*, November 1971.

⁵² The structural change of the abolition of piece-work may tend, in time, to eliminate many of these strikes. Piece-work disappeared from the coal mines under Robens, from the docks in 1967 and the day before Heath's freeze BLMC, Britain's only major car manufacturer, ended piece-work at its huge Longbridge works in a settlement that promises, by November 1975, to be worth £50 a week for many of its employees.

⁵³ Harold Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 641.

While capital needed state help both to modernize its labour relations and to control national wage levels, direct labour legislation was primarily designed for public consumption. Although state action was regarded as necessary by widely differing sections of the ruling class, the form it should take and the nature of the issues to be 'dealt' with were confused both by the three different levels involved (and by the vacillations of the Wilson administration). Heath decided on a single Act to tackle the seemingly intractable sectoral disputes, and to encourage nation-wide reorganization of the labour force at the factory level. In addition it was also a substitute for an incomes policy which allowed market forces to reign, while cutting back the ability of workers to defend their wage levels.

But the structure of militancy was changing. During the long period of restraint under Labour, better-paid workers managed to improve their position slightly. The more passive sectors on the other hand, became worse off. 'The negligible increase in net real wages from 1964 to 1969 concealed a situation in which some groups of workers were experiencing an actual decline in real living standards while others were enjoying a palpable improvement'.⁵⁴ This net drop in their standard of living, following on years of mediocre wages, finally goaded the lower paid into some action. Men who had not struck since 1926 came out—blastfurnacemen, postmen, dustmen. Women cleaners, farm workers, hospital attendants, nurses, teachers mobilized for the first time. Fittingly it was the miners, a traditionally militant group thrust for special reasons into the ranks of the lower-paid, who shattered the Government's Norm. Perhaps the finest example of a sudden leap from backwardness was the well documented Pilkington strike.⁵⁵ The workforce of this St Helen's based family company of glass manufacturers, the country's largest, was controlled by the General and Municipal Union, almost as nepotistic an organization as Pilkington's itself. In April 1970, encouraged by the Ford's settlement, the workers withdrew their labour. The GMU refused to make the strike official. Fury in the company town rose to such a pitch that the Union's local offices were publicly wrecked. It was the first major strike by Pilkington workers for a hundred years.

As militancy spread into traditionally more quiescent sectors, the weight of strikes shifted towards official confrontations. This was in sharp contrast to the pattern of small-scale unofficial strikes which predominated in the sixties, and it placed union officials in the front line.

Brokers Between Capital and Labour

Reformist trade unions are brokers between capital and labour, essential to capitalist relations of production in bourgeois democracies. Inevitably they act to perpetuate continued exploitation of their members, while at the same time they are committed to defending them against the 'excesses' of capitalism, and if possible improving their standard of

⁵⁴ Wilkinson and Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁵⁵ See Tony Lane and Kenneth Roberts, *Strikes at Pilkington's*, 1971.

living. This is a precarious position. To sustain it reformist leaders rely in part on economic growth to provide for the incomes of employees. If there is a net decline, as there was for some sectors of the working class between 1965-71, then union leaderships will fail in their limited objectives and will lose the support of their members unless they fight back. Unions necessarily 'sell' the labour of their membership to capital; their *raison d'être* is to get a price which the members will, if grudgingly, accept. This holds for right-wing as well as left-wing reformists; both must follow a course which ensure that they do not lose the following of their rank and file.

Of course a trade union leadership also has at its disposal the command structure of the union itself. The more autocratic and bullying it is, the more it can afford to ignore the feelings of workers on the shop-floor. But the growth of shop stewards has made this kind of unionism harder to sustain. In Britain there are now 200,000 stewards or more directly elected from the shop floor. 2,000 of them are full time, compared to 3,000 union officials. It was these active organizers who secured the election of the incumbent President of the AUEW, Scanlon, whose predecessor, Carron, had once described shop stewards as 'were-wolves'.

Nevertheless even the most reactionary trade union leaders cannot barter away the interests of their membership as easily as social democratic politicians. For the latter, the important surrenders are made in office with all the aura of government to 'excuse' them. Trade union leaders, by contrast, are always in office and their compromises take a different form. In order to implement concessions, they must be sufficiently strong to control their members. Their only other alternative is to invite a defeat that will shift the burden of failure onto the rank and file (but if the men are stubborn, inviting defeat means risking victory). With widely differing degrees of reluctance, then all trade union leaders reflect the feelings of the rank and file. Thus in an inflationary context even right-wing trade union leaderships can be pressured into making demands for unheard-of percentage increases.

There were also other structural forces behind the confrontation unleashed by Heath. Politically, the unions in Britain have swung to the left, for reasons that demand independent analysis, while the long-term structural decline of old sectors coincided with the cyclical downturn of the economy. The men involved in the sharpest clashes with the Government were all from sectors which were already trade unionized in Edwardian times—shipbuilding (UCS), postmen, railwaymen, dockers and the miners. The last three, the famous Triple Alliance of 1,350,000 employees in 1913, had diminished to 450,000 men by 1970. Finally, the experience of incomes policies during the sixties, the discussions of national plans and international comparisons and the development of minimal union research departments, familiarized union leaders with Keynesian policies and strengthened their ability to argue for high wages as a rational bourgeois option.

It was under these conditions that Heath decided to extend state power over wages, prices and production by negative and punitive means.

State Apparatus and Government

If the above analysis is accurate it shows that there are structural limits both to the activity and to the *inactivity* of trade unions. What then are the structural constraints upon the action of a capitalist government within a bourgeois democracy? For an answer to this question is also crucial to an understanding of the problems created by Heath's strategy.

It is well established that within the bourgeoisie as a class groups with different interests compete for political and cultural predominance and in particular for control of the state via the government. Yet too little attention has been paid to the divergence within bourgeois democracies between the state and government. Governments, commanding as they do overall legislative and executive powers and so directing both police and the armed forces, control the state. But the state's non-elective apparatus, the judiciary, the civil service, the general staff, the police, see their job as permanently defending the bourgeois order. It is, of course, standard bourgeois ideology that these non-elective aspects of the state are above and 'independent' of politics. This gives the ruling class as a whole a powerful second line of defence against any mistakes on the part of the government of the day. On the other hand, if this apparatus is used in too overtly an arbitrary fashion, its mystic veil of neutrality is torn away.

The structural difference between the state apparatus and government is fundamental.⁵⁶ They are two distinct, linked, instruments of rule. The government, the 'positive' steering instrument is the more transitional and mobilizes public opinion. The steady turning of the wheels of administration provides the 'negative' gyroscopic stability keeping the machinery of state on course, or at least on some course while governments dither or change altogether. Ralph Miliband has a precise formulation: 'The fact that the government does speak in the name of the state and formally *invested* with state power does not mean that it effectively *controls* that power'.⁵⁷ Naturally the distinction is most evident in those trembling states from pre-war Bolivia to the Fourth Republic when governments rapidly succeed one another with little noticeable difference apart from a growing list of prime ministers. For Britain in the early 70s, however, the relationship between the two instruments of rule was posed in a *dynamic* fashion—by the extension of state power to underpin an unstable economy. Heath's mistakes originate from a serious mis-judgment on this score, which can be best understood by contrasting it to Labour's choice.

Wilson's Labour Strategy

Like the Labour Party in its industrial relations strategy, the Con-

⁵⁶ It is not the same as the 'problem' of the links between governments and their senior civil servants and advisors. All weak ministers, especially social democratic ones, are hegemonized by their permanent officials. This is only part of the tug-of-war of capitalist policy making, less publicized and so more 'mysterious' than the everyday manoeuvres within political parties over alternative policies.

⁵⁷ Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, 1969, p. 50.

servatives decided on a policy which would both increase the power of the government to intervene and would generate powers for the non-elective, 'non-political' apparatus of the state. But the two parties placed a contrary emphasis on these two aspects. Labour envisaged the line of force proceeding in the following direction: industrial capital/government/unions/workers. Heath's strategy, on the other hand, implied a different hierarchy of coercion: industrial capital/permanent state apparatus/unions/workers.

Heath was reinforced in his choice by his assessment of Wilson's style in Number 10. Characteristically he disliked the compromising bargains and cosy ideology of Labour's industrial propaganda, which always seemed to give something away, as short sighted and opportunist. Nevertheless his theatrical gimmicks concealed a consistent intention on Wilson's part, however miserably he may have failed in executing it.⁵⁸ The main thrust of his policies was to gain official trade union co-operation over the whole field of incomes policy in order to enable him to intervene industry by industry, region by region, and even factory by factory to stem unofficial action. With an intimate understanding of the role of the unions as brokers, Wilson, quite consistently—from a social democratic standpoint—set out to make the Government a brokers' broker. But when, for electoral reasons, he drafted anti-strike legislation and the unions adamantly opposed it, Wilson found himself having to make a pragmatic *volts face*. Yet despite this fiasco, he could retain his basic economic goals because the projected bill was peripheral to his main policies.

For his trial run at industrial relations legislation was only a supplement to full scale government intervention in British industry. Loans, grants, industrial reorganization, an attempt at a national plan, regional subsidies and in the case of steel, nationalization, were only part of the list. Modern governments have accumulated an array of such interventionist machinery, distinct in scope from their traditional powers. Wilson's armoury was a British equivalent of weaponry now characteristic of metropolitan capitalist administrations everywhere. Bill Warren has recently outlined how governments in Western Europe, Scandinavia, Japan and the US have started to integrate trade unions into planning and guide private enterprise to facilitate economic growth and full employment, under the rigours of international competition.⁵⁹ He shows conclusively that such policies, though still in their early days, are now virtually universal.

Labour's most original innovation was the Prices and Incomes Board (PIB). In its five years of existence (1965-70) it issued 107 reports affecting, in different degrees, an estimated 45 per cent of the total

⁵⁸ Hugh Clegg's *How to Run an Incomes Policy, and why we made such a mess of the last one*, 1971 provides a graphic account of the Labour administration's comedy of mistakes. Clegg also points out that although Wilson's was the first British government to take office already committed to an incomes policy, its 'norms' only accorded with reality for 6 months out of 5 years.

⁵⁹ Bill Warren, 'Capitalist Planning and the State', *NLR* 72, March/April 1972.

workforce.⁶⁰ In its final report the PIB summarized its class role most accurately: 'We tried to contribute to the improvement of industrial relations by helping to develop situations in which management had a more effective control of the work situation based on the co-operation and consent of the workers concerned'.⁶¹

In its private sessions and public reports the PIB contributed to a British 'learning process' and, though the Board could not initiate its investigations, it did work towards a limited *dirigisme*. As a solution to the problem of extending state power, it was new. In her analytic history of the PIB's short life, Joan Mitchell refers to the Board's own 'political-diplomatic interpretation of its role, as a general instrument of reform'⁶² (my emphasis). The Industrial Reorganisation Corporation, which funded mergers and special company developments, played a similar role in resolving contradictions between capitalists. The Labour Party, in other words, was moving towards establishing a form of mini-government of industry and industrial relations *within* the permanent state apparatus; listening, advising, directing, reporting, even spending money. The PIB was staffed by people from both political parties and was thus qualified, according to their logic, for a special 'neutral' status, yet this allowed it the active orientation of politicians rather than the passive formalism characteristic of civil servants.

Heath's Strategy for Labour

Heath shut down the PIB. For all his apparent modernism, he went flatly against the trend of advanced capitalist countries and set out to diminish the role of government in industry. Instead he decided to increase the powers of a traditional permanent arm of the state, the courts, to tip the balance between companies and their workforce in favour of the former, without caring for the consent of the latter.

He established a new high court, the NIRC, and gave wide independent powers to firms and individuals to sue against 'unfair industrial practices'. The NIRC was to adjudicate these cases and establish what was 'fair' and 'unfair' within the guidelines set out in the Act. At the same time as the Government promised the carrot of limited protection within these new laws for unions which registered, it financially penalised unions which stayed off the official Register. As a result the previously tax-exempt unions now pay considerable sums every year to the Exchequer. In short, the Government prepared the most intense judicial and financial discrimination against non-registered unions. The price of registration was surrendering control of the union's internal organization. For the Registrar, yet another 'neutral' employee of the state, could rewrite the unions' rule books, direct the unions as to their powers over shop stewards, and determine the proper form of procedure for calling strikes.

⁶⁰ Calculated by R. Liddle and W. McCarthy, 'The Impact of the Prices and Incomes Board on the Reform of Collective Bargaining', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, November 1972.

⁶¹ Quoted in Joan Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

Contemptuous of the vacillations of the official leadership of the labour movement, Heath seems to have assumed that such resistance would simply collapse under a blow like this. In his lunch with Cecil King, referred to earlier, King sourly predicted a general strike. Heath assured him that there was no such danger. As we have seen, militancy was not, at the time, characteristic of the working class as a whole and the unions were in general extremely hostile to unofficial actions. So Heath must have assumed that wage and salary earners would simply absorb increased exploitation and that union leaders had an equal capacity for humiliation. He attacked the working class as well as its organizations, and he did not expect them to fight back.

Wilson understood the nature of trade unions better. While Heath, at first, thought that he could maximise the benefits of the key weakness of the unions—their willingness to compromise—by striking at it, Wilson tried to cash it by encouragement; he saw his job as assisting the unions to bleed the energy and determination of the organized workforce through small concessions, when necessary, combined with manipulation, appeals and an interventionist apparatus that would give 'management effective control with the consent of the workers'.

The two types of coercion exercised by state apparatus and government press on contradictory facets of trade unions. The practical question facing the ruling class was to get the balance of pressure right. Heath failed to do so. In contrast to Wilson's 'positive' interventionism, Heath used 'negative' means—courts, fines and the strategic withdrawal of the government. But, as has been argued, the ruling class generally favoured the former. *The Director's* panel of 100 leading businessmen shows that industrialists were unhappy and confused by Heath's policies.⁶³ Peter Jay, the Economics Editor of *The Times*, has recently revealed that the Governor of the Bank of England was 'urging' an incomes policy even prior to the miners' strike,⁶⁴ and his voice usually reflects international opinion as well. The OECD report in mid-1972 also demanded an incomes policy.⁶⁵ When these currents are added to the attitude of Maudling in the Cabinet, many judges, editorialists on most papers and of course the Right and Centre of the Labour Party and trade unions, the real difficulty is to find out those who supported Heath's chosen line with any conviction.

Juridical Equality

At first sight Heath's isolation might seem surprising. Why should there be such widespread hostility in ruling class and labourist circles to 'negative' policies? Capitalism functions via a free market and in principle is hostile to state interference in the economy. It has, moreover, been argued that the 'informal authoritarianism of incomes policies and contemporary capitalist planning will politicize industrial relations and depoliticize parliamentary politics, thus strengthening

⁶³ *The Director*, December 1972.

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 12 December 1972.

⁶⁵ OECD, *Economic Outlook*, July 1972, pp. 52-3.

revolutionary currents among the working class'.⁶⁶ If this hypothesis were true, Heath's 'abrasive' policies should be a obvious first choice.

Bourgeois antagonism towards the Heath strategy becomes more understandable, however, once set in the context of the basic preconditions of the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. In his outstanding analysis of the Marxism of the Second International, Colletti argues that: 'For Marx, modern *social inequality* or capitalist exploitation occurs simultaneously with the fullest development of *juridical-political equality*'.⁶⁷ In effect, the wage-contract which ensures the appropriation of the surplus labour of the worker by the capitalist presupposes the 'parity' of the two parties to it: the worker and capitalist are juridically equal citizens, each formally free to accept or reject the 'exchange' between them.

Thus there is a structural connection between the fundamental economic mechanism of surplus extraction and the political form of bourgeois democracy. Marx explained its basis with great clarity. Comparing capitalism to feudalism and slavery, he wrote in *Capital*: 'In the corvée, the labour of the worker for himself, and his compulsory labour for his lord, differ in space and time in the clearest possible way. In slave labour, even that part of the working day in which the slave is only replacing the value of his own means of existence, in which, therefore, in fact he works for himself alone, appears as labour for his master. All the slave's labour appears as unpaid labour. In wage labour, on the contrary, even surplus-labour or unpaid labour appears as paid. In the former the property-relation conceals the labour of the slave for himself, in the latter the money-relation conceals the unrequited labour of the wage labourer. This phenomenal form, which makes the actual relation invisible, and, indeed, shows the direct opposite of that relation, forms the basis of all the juridical notions of both labourer and capitalist, of all the mystifications of the capitalist mode of production, of all its illusions as to liberty. . .'⁶⁸

The ideological effectiveness, however, of these mystifications depends on maintaining an institutional division and distance between the 'dictatorial' powers of the state and the 'freedom' of the market. Direct interposition of the state, especially the law, in the relationship of the wage-contract inevitably tends to destroy the illusion that the latter represents a natural, and so unquestionable, form of 'fair exchange' that has nothing to do with the distribution of power. Such intervention risks making the 'invisible' inequality of the real relationship between workers and capitalists manifestly apparent. The imperative necessity for contemporary capitalism to achieve a new degree of state intervention in the economy (a modern expression of the contradiction between the increasingly socialized forces of production and the private relations of production) thus contains a danger for the bourgeoisie: it risks exposing the central ideological mystification of the system, on which the consent of the masses to the reign of capital rests. Heath's

⁶⁶ Bill Warren 'Capitalist Planning and the State', *NLA* 72, p. 29.

⁶⁷ Lucio Colletti, *From Rousseau to Lenin*, 1972, p. 93.

⁶⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 339-40.

first solution to this inescapable problem was, however, perhaps the worst possible one from the tactical point of view of maintaining stable bourgeois rule. The Conservatives, in their attempt to use the judiciary to reform industrial relations, selected the one branch of the capitalist state that is, by tradition, the most 'neutral', the most 'im-personal' and the most 'inflexible' in its phenomenal appearance. By using the courts to enforce punitive anti-unionism, Heath presumably imagined that he could utilize the majesty of the law to awe the working class, which in England has been traditionally 'law-abiding'. In fact the ideological effect was exactly the reverse. Responsibility for coercion in the area of the wage contract was displaced from the government onto the judiciary. This did not depoliticize the attack on the unions; it repoliticized the function of the courts for the mass of the proletariat. Courts by-pass the marshland of Parliamentary squabbles, they are the voice of the state's permanent apparatus and represent the bourgeois as a whole—in its national guise. Thus, if they are maladroitly projected into the full glare of the class struggle, courts may be seen to directly impose class rule. This can threaten both the mirage of their neutrality and the appearance of the wage contract as an economic freedom. A certain narrowing of the illusory separation of the political and economic spheres is inevitable in contemporary capitalism. Heath, however, wanted to expand this 'distance' and he got rid of the machinery for government intervention. Then he turned to the courts to strengthen market forces. The consequence was a situation which threatened to collapse the mystic separation altogether.

Interventionism

By contrast, Wilson's perspective was to use the elected government to adjudicate settlements in the 'national' interest. He set up 'independent' boards to guide levels of investment, wages and prices, he deployed an emergency 'freeze', he made the TUC agree that it would try and curb wildcat strikes. Under Wilson's strategy wages were attacked by direct government intervention. For the government (in clear contradistinction to the courts) can claim that it has power through the equal votes of the whole population and is 'answerable' to the 'nation-as-a-whole'. The executive, overtly the supreme political authority in the state, vested with the duty of managing the affairs of the country, can thus assume the guise of a pseudo-arbitrator between the two 'partners' of industry. This replicates at the national level the ordinary economic wage-bargain; 'natural', 'fair' exchange is overseen by an elected government and 'independent' boards. This approach reinforces *both* the appearance of equality and the reality of inequality; it can strengthen both the phenomenal appearance of 'fairness' as well as the actual advantage of capital. It therefore constitutes a comparatively smooth extension of bourgeois-democratic state power, which reinforces the fundamental mechanisms of the supremacy of capital in order to cope with new problems of regulating and controlling the national economy.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Bill Warren's argument that incomes policies and planning 'ultimately expose the true class character of (capitalist) democracy' still carries some weight, for such interventions socialize the 'private' relations of the wage contract, the form of employ-

As Nixon's new economic policies have shown, however, it does not follow that government intervention must be conciliatory or that it cannot be backed by punitive weapons. Similarly, the Industrial Relations Act may symbolize Heath's first attack on the unions, but it should not be fetishized. The initial direction of his domestic policy was established prior to it becoming law and was then reversed while the Act still remains on the statute books. The Cabinet was defeated before the NIRC opened its doors as well as afterwards, and the recent switch to interventionist policies has taken place alongside the existence of the Court. In fact, even fines and injunctions may well prove successful if they are used as a last resort to support an overall policy that has been enunciated in the 'national' interest.⁷⁰

The role of voluntary agreements, too, between governments, capitalists and unions, is neither necessary for systematic state intervention nor incompatible with it. Prior to the 1970 Election, alongside his attack on statutory wage policies and his commitment to bring in industrial relations legislation, Heath called for voluntary agreement with the unions. As late as October 1972 he told the Conservative Party Conference that the aim of his talks with the CBI and the TUC was to bring the Government into 'partnership' with 'both sides of industry'. The Scandinavian example illustrates how profitable such arrangements can be. But national voluntary agreements can also be dangerous weapons (especially for non-Social Democratic governments) if they are used to cut workers' incomes. As shown above, bourgeois commentators have argued that hard agreements with little pay-off for wage earners run the risk of dividing union officials from working-class militants—to the advantage of the latter. On the other hand, as Wilson discovered with the 'Declaration of Intent' in 1966, such agreements without means of enforcing them are worthless scraps of paper, and it was one of his errors to rely on such voluntary settlements. Heath, however, with his new Nixon-model strategy, seems to have grasped the advantages of keeping the unions clear of responsibility for the temporary rigours of the 'Freeze' and 'Phase II'. For it is in the interests of the bourgeoisie that the inevitable working-class opposition is led by the unions, in safe law-abiding fashion. In their 'Phase III', no doubt, the Conservatives will continue to draw on the American example and will make enough concessions to bring in the unions; just as Nixon has done in forming the 'Cost of Living Council', which is studded with leaders of us labour and capital.

It now looks as if such institutions will become a permanent feature of bourgeois states. Heath's initial policies throw into relief the forces that have made him, two and a half years after abolishing Labour's Prices and Incomes Board, set up new boards with even greater powers than

ment. Incomes policies may be a logical choice for contemporary capitalism, but they do not necessarily work, as Wilson's government amply demonstrated, and in a situation of acute crisis may well serve to politicize economic disintegration.

⁷⁰ There were, for example, bitter complaints from employers about picketing during the miners' and the construction workers' strikes. The Government instituted a secret internal investigation and special anti-picket police squads have been reported in training.

the PM. Yet, as Wilson discovered, even though the mechanisms may be well geared, it does not follow that the wheels will turn round; for however much the efficiency of a motor is improved the benefit comes only when it is run at full power. By sacrificing economic growth to the balance of payments, both before and after devaluation, Labour sabotaged its attempt to modernize the British economy, and discredited the attempt itself. In turn, for two years, Heath squandered the opportunity given him by the payments surplus which Labour finally achieved. Through his facile conception of the power of the courts, and his anachronistic idea of the government's role, Heath further weakened the international position of the British economy.

New Lessons and Old

The defeats that Heath and his Government suffered at the hands of the working class in 1972 were set up by the Government itself. Not only did it try to push through policies structurally dangerous to capitalism, it did so at a time when working-class economic combativity was at a high pitch. Yet, although its policy for an 'N minus 1 Norm', and the reliance it placed on the IR Act, were shattered, the Cabinet managed to save itself. During the events themselves the authorities frequently moved swiftly and pragmatically to de-fuse conflicts. Both the miners' and the dockers' struggles threatened to detonate a gigantic clash, a 'May', but both were settled on their own terms: no major chain reaction took place. Instead, in a series of intricate and startling moves it was the Prime Minister who, in mid-Summer found himself isolated, and was obliged to reverse his policies and retreat to a more conventional consensus politics. This turnabout, forced on him to prevent a really major confrontation, dominated the year: there was a convergence of conflicts but no rupture. In the end, the Premier who broke with the 'Special Relationship', looked across the Atlantic to learn how to intervene in the economy.

The Government may have learnt some new lessons. The miners taught the working class an old one: that victory can only go to those who fight, and that aggressive action, far from frightening off support, can attract and hold it. Throughout the fifties and sixties politicians of both parties berated trade unionists who 'held the country to ransom', and the opinion polls showed that a large majority of the population apparently agreed with them. But when, for the first time, a relatively small group of workers really did seem to hold the country to ransom, and shut down the nation's power supplies in order to win a pay rise, most of the same population supported their action.

In 1926 the mine-owners cut miners' wages. In the General Strike that followed the TUC betrayed the class it claims to lead. In 1972, with a sudden increase in unemployment and every wage and salary earner threatened by price rises, the situation was reversed. Instead of miners looking to their fellow workers for help, the proletariat across the country supported the miners against a government that was attacking them all. It proved to be an effective combination, not least because the TUC was safely on the sidelines. Factory occupations, flying pickets, national shut-downs and the defiance of the Court had a defensive

purpose in Britain last year—in that they continued a long tradition of trade unionism. But they were a victorious defence against a swift and frontal attack, and they succeeded by using aggressive tactics. Heath's tactics, in contrast, were maladroit. By withdrawing the government from industrial negotiations he placed it in an inflexible position that most of his allies were determined to reverse, just as they are now trusting that the working class will revert to its old ways. Indeed the struggles of 1972 seem to fit easily into the long tradition of labourism, because they had an overall defensive character and were led by men from some of the oldest sections of the working class. But labourism is a tradition of losing, not winning. By 1973, when a new epoch opened for Britain with entry into the Common Market, the working class had said goodbye to a past of defeat in a way that raises new hope for the future.

Introduction to Benjamin & Brecht

Benjamin had what Lukács so enormously lacked, a unique eye precisely for significant detail, for the marginal . . . for the impinging and unaccustomed, unschematic particularity which does not 'fit in' and therefore deserves a quite special and incisive attention.

Ernst Bloch

Like Mayakovsky and the Russian Formalists, Brecht and Benjamin form one of the classic literary partnerships of the revolutionary Socialist movement. Their relationship, however, is only now coming to light, for it was not until 1966 that the majority of Benjamin's essays on Brecht were published.

Walter Benjamin was an eccentric 'man of letters', born of a well-to-do German Jewish family in 1892. In the course of his lifetime, he underwent a complex change, transposing the structures and habits of his earlier mystical thought to enrich the categories of marxism.

Benjamin's idiosyncratic and difficult cast of mind blocked his way to an academic career. Scholastic authorities rejected his doctoral thesis (on the origins of German tragedy) for incomprehensibility. But not only that: Benjamin, with characteristic lack of diplomacy, had taken issue with Johannes Volkelt, one of the official aestheticians of German academia. Barred from secure employment, he became an itinerant man of letters, experiencing the intellectual proletarianization he describes in 'The Author as Producer', one of the chapters in the forthcoming NLB volume of Benjamin's writings on Brecht. Had Benjamin gained a university post it is difficult to say how his thought might have developed. With hindsight, many of his marxist ideas are traceable in different forms to the days before his professional fate was decided. However, what is certain is that his precarious economic position sharpened his attraction to marxism. At one point he contemplated joining the Communist Party.

The period was the late twenties and early thirties. Asya Lacia, a Communist theatrical producer, whom Benjamin had met in Capri in 1924, introduced him to Brecht whom he visited frequently during the

thirties, staying with him for long periods during the latter's Danish exile. Throughout the decade, 1930 to 1939, responding to the rise and triumph of fascism, Benjamin wrote his sketches and studies on Brecht and his work. Less fortunate than Brecht (luck was not one of his stars), Benjamin killed himself in flight from the Gestapo, while attempting to cross the Franco-Spanish border in 1940.

Benjamin's writing is essayistic, aphoristic, fragmentary. Even his doctoral thesis is more a philosophical meditation than a systematic exposition and demonstration. At first it might seem odd that Brecht came together with Benjamin and not with someone more politically committed, Georg Lukács, for instance. But Brecht and Lukács never saw eye to eye. Whereas Lukács was hostile to the experimental art of the twentieth century because it lacked a sense of totality and perspective, Brecht shared with Benjamin a scavenging, magpie temperament, receptive to the often fragmented nature of modern art and literature. Benjamin was an extravagant collector and antiquarian, a passionate roamer and observer of cities, who could extract cultural histories from wayside odds and ends.

The diary extract, 'Conversations with Brecht', published here, seems to show Brecht as the giver, Benjamin the taker; which was no doubt true psychologically. Benjamin's old Zionist friend, Gershom Scholem, wrote: 'Brecht was the harder nature and made a deep impact upon the more sensitive Benjamin who entirely lacked athletic qualities.' Intellectually, the relationship is certainly more complex and two-sided. There are, for instance, strong indications that the ideas and implications of 'epic theatre' were common to them both before they met.

This diary extract (never intended for publication) is so valuable because it gives the immediate atmosphere of the two men's conversations, their cast of mind, manner of speech, fondness for image, parable, allegory, aphorism, all of which we find separately in their writings. Whereas Benjamin was the more metaphorical thinker, from Brecht he learnt—what his former associates, from Gershom Scholem to T. W. Adorno always deplored, considered disastrous—'crude thinking' (*plumpes Denken*), that need for thought to simplify itself, crystallize out into essentials before it could be made practice.

Benjamin belonged to a generation of thinkers who, in the years just preceding the First World War, rebelled against the linguistic barrenness of German academic discourse. In different ways these thinkers sought to validate and discover meaning by revitalizing the semantic and metaphorical attributes of language itself. Marxism benefited from this generation in the writings of Benjamin, Bloch, and Adorno. At the same time, little will be gained from these Marxists, if they are approached with a 'commonsense', materialistic gauge. Here, as for poetry, one must follow Goethe's dictum:

*Wer den Dichter will verstehen
Muss in Dichters Lande gehen.*

(If the poet you'd understand,
You must go into the poet's land.)

With Benjamin it was the poet, Brecht, who was able to toughen the materialist sinews of the critic.

The Modern Sage

Two things, essentially, linked Brecht and Benjamin: a similar historical imagination and a similar humanism. Like Gramsci they were distinguished from the official Communist movement of the thirties by a deep historical pessimism into which, according to Romain Rolland's formula, 'Pessimism of the Intellect, Optimism of the Will', they planted seedlings of hope, and upon which they grounded a dialectical understanding of past and future. As with Gramsci their pessimism was shaped by the victories of fascism. Germany seemed bent on its thousand-year empire. In addition, the degeneration of Socialism in the USSR quenched a hopeful attitude to the present.

The pessimism was strategic, designed to engender hope, not for foreseeable victories or reversals of fortune, but for the survival of the species as such. This was not yet the nuclear age, but Brecht spoke prophetically: 'They're planning for thirty thousand years ahead. . . . They're out to destroy everything. Every living cell contracts under their blows. . . . They cripple the baby in the mother's womb.' In his friend, Benjamin discovered 'a power that sprang from the depths of history no less deep than the power of the fascists'.

Brecht and Benjamin thought in millennia, geologically, of new dark and ice ages. They discovered optimism in men's most ancient teachers. 'The hard thing gives way' is the maxim which Brecht's customs official elicits from the Chinese sage in the poem 'Legend of the Origin of the Book Tao Te Ching on Lao Tzu's Way into Exile'. And Benjamin comments: 'The poem comes to us at a time when such words ring in the ears of men like a promise which has nothing to concede to the promises of a Messiah. For the contemporary reader, however, they contain not only a promise but a lesson:

"... That yielding water in motion
Gets the better in the end of granite and porphyry."

To align oneself with all those things which, like water, are 'inconspicuous and sober and inexhaustible' would remind one, Benjamin argued, of the cause of the losers and the oppressed. In his 'Sixth Thesis on the Philosophy of History' (in *Illuminations*), he wrote: 'Only the historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.' History was for him an ever-present arena, never (as with Lukács) merely the 'preconditions of the present'. The battles of the past had to be fought and refought; if not they might be lost again.

Benjamin puts this thesis into practice in his analysis of Brecht's Lao Tzu poem. Here the 'spark of hope in the past' is that momentary 'friendship' between sage and customs official which elicits Lao Tzu's wisdom. Such friendliness forms Brecht's and Benjamin's 'minimum

programme of humanity'; and Benjamin concludes his commentary with the sage-like injunction: 'Whoever wants to make the hard thing give way should miss no opportunity for friendliness.'

At the end of the 'Conversations', Benjamin quotes a Brechtian maxim: 'Don't start from the good old things but the bad new ones.' The same phrase occurs in a Brecht essay on Lukács, whom he criticizes for a lingering attachment to the old masters and the 'good old days' of bourgeois culture. Lukács opposes the patrician Thomas Mann to Kafka, insecure visionary of despair. In the 'Conversations' Benjamin and Brecht tussle over Kafka. Brecht accuses Benjamin of prolonging Kafka's own self-mystifications. Yet elsewhere Brecht was to include Kafka among those 'documents of despair' from which Socialist writers may learn because of their innovating literary techniques.

What is 'bad' about Kafka is the despair; what is 'new' is not merely the technique, but the kinds of perception and understanding that inform it. Brecht describes Kafka's outlook as that of 'a man caught under the wheels', of the petty bourgeois who is 'bound to get it in the neck'. But this is not the petty bourgeois who turns to fascism, to a leader. Even from under the wheels he continues to ask questions; 'he is wise'. It is, as Benjamin says of Brecht's Galy Gay in *A Man's a Man*, the wisdom of a man 'who lets the contradictions of existence enter into the only place where they can, in the last analysis, be resolved: the life of a man'. Kafka's heroes are crushed under the wheels. Nevertheless, they number, along with Schweyk and Leopold Bloom, among the potential 'wise men' of the 'bad new' days. It is with them, victims and flotsam of mass society, that Brecht begins. Where Lukács had berated twentieth-century literature for not producing 'rounded characters', Brecht rejoined that dehumanization would not be lifted by leaving the mass, but by becoming part of it. In his hands, the Kafkaesque victim, the anonymous K., the petty bourgeois under the wheels, becomes the Brechtian K., the canny Herr Keuner. Similarly, Benjamin remarks of Galy Gay: 'A man's a man: this is not fidelity to any single essence of one's own, but a continual readiness to admit a new essence.' The 'bad new' days destroy personality, create anonymity. Brecht and Benjamin start with the anonymous man and encourage his resilience, so that the 'hard thing' may give way. But because of their fear of a new dark age, they think in a perspective which goes beyond the immediate class struggle to encompass all the social struggles of humanity, where qualities like cunning and endurance are more important than heroism. Brecht's drama and poetry form a humanist *sadismatum* for dark ages. His 'heroes' are resourceful, humorous nobodies.

Epic Theatre

Epic theatre is the product of a *historical* imagination. Brecht's 'plagiarism', his rewriting of Shakespeare and Marlowe, are experiments in whether a historical event and its literary treatment might be made to turn out differently or at least be viewed differently, if the processes of history are revalued. Brecht's drama is a deliberate unseating of the supremacy of tragedy and tragic inevitability. His 'historical pessimism' cuts the ground from under the truly pessimistic 'optimism' of all those

who place their faith in historical inevitability. Echoing his own 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', Benjamin comments: "It can happen this way, but it can also happen quite a different way"—that is the fundamental attitude of one who writes for epic theatre.' The possibility that history might have been different will inspire a *two res agitur* in the minds of present-day spectators: history may now be different; it is in your hands, even though the means at your disposal are alight and the qualities required of you are perhaps undramatic, unromantic. Hence, in recovering the past, the epic dramatist will 'tend to emphasize not the great decisions which lie along the main line of history but the incommensurable and the singular'.

Benjamin's encounter with Brecht leads him, in 'What is Epic Theatre?' (both the two existing versions are in the NLB volume), to sketch out a new theory of the history of drama which is already suggested in his earlier, pre-Marxist *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Benjamin saw affinity between the allegoric imagination of the German baroque dramatists and the artistic needs of the twentieth century; first in the melancholy spirit of the former, with its emblematic but inscrutable insignia, which he rediscovered in Kafka; then in the cognate principle of montage which he found in the work of Eisenstein and Brecht. Montage became for him the modern, constructive, active, unmelancholy form of allegory, namely the ability to connect dissimilars in such a way as to 'shock' people into new recognitions and understandings. A great deal of Benjamin's critical writing concerns itself with 'shock' as the primary experience of dislocation in modern urban, mass, industrial life. He considered Baudelaire and Proust, for example, sensitive reactors to the new 'shocks' of modern life, who at the same time used their art as a means of self-protection. Such self-protection, he argued, is no longer needed by the revolutionary artist who welcomes 'shock' with critical distance, with 'heightened presence of mind'. Thus Benjamin came to regard montage, i.e. the ability to capture the infinite, sudden or subterranean connections of dissimilars, as the major constitutive principle of the artistic imagination in the age of technology.

For fruitful antecedents, he looks back beyond German baroque to those forms of drama where the montage-principle first made its appearance. He finds it wherever a critical intelligence intervenes to comment upon the representation, in other words where the representation is never complete in itself, but is openly and continually compared with the life represented; where the actors can at any moment stand outside themselves and show themselves to be actors.

Once more Chinese culture plays its part in the thinking of the two men. Benjamin points to the custom of Chinese theatre to 'make what is shown on the stage unsensational' and underlines Brecht's debt to this technique. Then, very originally, he sketches out a byway of European theatre which, he suggests, had always sought to escape from the 'closed' drama of Greek tragedy, had always sought for an untragic drama. The untragic drama and the montage principle were closely connected in Benjamin's mind. That byway led via the medieval mystery play, German baroque drama, certain scenes of Shakespeare, Part II of Goethe's *Faust*, to Strindberg and finally Brecht and 'epic theatre': 'If,

that is, one can speak of a path at all, rather than an overgrown stalking-track along which the legacy of medieval and baroque drama has crept down to us over the sublime but barren massif of classicism.'

Benjamin quotes from the early Lukács to found a theory which takes an entirely opposed direction to Lukács's own subsequent dramaturgy. The later Lukács, concerned with the 'main line of history', treated 'stalking-tracks' as either non-existent or unworthy of mention. Basing himself on Hegel's concept of tragedy, he categorized the dramatic hero as an exponent of will, the protagonist of a conflict between two mutually exclusive ethical demands. To carry through his will against all obstacles was the hero's sole aim, his glory and his defeat. Benjamin, however, noted: 'Plato, Lukács wrote twenty years ago, already recognized the undramatic nature of the highest form of man, the sage. And yet in his dialogues he brought him to the threshold of the stage.' That is, Benjamin's alternative history of European drama begins with Plato, where the wise and dispassionate man is hero. Indeed, Socrates applauded the new 'rationalist' drama of Euripides, which concluded the great period of Greek tragedy. And Benjamin considered Brecht a 'Socratic' dramatist: 'One may regard epic theatre as more dramatic than the dialogue (it is not always): but epic theatre need not, for that reason, be any the less philosophical.'

In Brecht's transformation, the sage, from Galy Gay in *A Man's a Man* to Azdak in the *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and Matti in *Herr Pontila*, is the man who has suffered and travelled much, who changes his role to suit his circumstances. He is, in Benjamin's words, 'an empty stage on which the contradictions of our society are acted out'. It is through this 'empty', 'consenting', pliant, adaptable 'hero' that some of the principles of montage—*Verfremdung* (alienation), exchanging roles and identities—may best be enacted. Such a device is used by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, in the figure of the hermaphrodite blind seer, Tiresias, who has seen everything before, who witnesses and suffers everything again. But he is a figure of nostalgia, a traditional stoic sage who speaks the language of snobbish irony and can bequeath nothing to posterity but the primal syllables of the Indo-European tongue. Brecht's sages or 'thinking men' are by contrast men of sense and vitality. Galy Gay learns his lesson, masters his situation, and for all his adaptability, indeed because of it, proves the only humane person in the play; able to show 'friendliness' to the man whose identity he allowed himself to rob. Azdak, the rogue, can make justice reign for a brief talismanic hour. Galileo, though not a man of the people, but who belongs with the 'adaptable' heroes, can, in the second version of the play, which Benjamin did not live to read, make a self-critique of the scientist that encompasses the history of professional men from the Renaissance to the present.

In his metaphysically probing thought, Benjamin sees Brecht's epic theatre as a form not merely of 'Socratic', but of truly Platonic drama. The aim of the address, 'The Author as Producer', is to find a political answer, a political role for the artist that would placate Plato's strictures in the *Republic*. Benjamin's historical imagination uncovers a path that leads from the dialogues to epic theatre. In his disquisitions on Brecht, Benjamin seeks to rescue the artist in Plato, whom Plato himself feared.

Art and Politics

In one respect, by eliding the politicization of art with the use of artistic 'means of production' or apparatus, Benjamin and Brecht at times constricted the relationship between politics and art. Brecht, in his later theory and practice, was able to clarify this confusion. Benjamin died before he could completely think through a new materialist aesthetics.

Brecht's earlier attitudes were shaped by Piscator and the Russian ex-Futurists, like Tretyakov, for whom the destruction of a theatre of illusion meant a frontal attack on the bourgeoisie itself. Stanislavskian reproduction was considered bourgeois as such. To be anti-bourgeois or proletarian was to show how things worked, while they were being shown; to 'lay bare the device' (in the words of the Russian Formalists). Art should be considered a form of production, not a mystery; the stage should appear like a factory with the machinery fully exposed.

Certainly the Doric or Corinthian pillars which fronted the bourgeois bank served a reactionary purpose. But the modern glass-plated banks show nothing more of the workings of capitalism. As an analogy with Brechtian theory, this would be crude and unjust, for, as we have seen, it was precisely the use of montage which constructed the political connections that were not immediately visible. Nevertheless, throughout the left-wing avant-garde art of the twenties and thirties, the belief predominated that to attack and repudiate 'illusionism' or 'reproduction' itself constituted a progressive political act, constituted *the* way in which politics could enter directly into art. This belief continues to affect all radical and left thinking on aesthetics today.

Benjamin's development up to this point had been singular. He began, very typically for the time, as an aesthetic philosopher who lamented the passing of old traditions, as modern technology and mass society took their place. He was anything but a revolutionary avant-garde thinker. He was always avant-garde, but in the spirit of an Eliot (with whom indeed he shared a great deal: Eliot's recovery of the metaphysical poets stems from the same roots as Benjamin's interest in German baroque drama), and as a critic he matched the associative, allegorical powers of Eliot's poetry.

Benjamin's attitude to the newspaper illustrates his further evolution. In 'The Storyteller', his essay on Leskov in *Illuminations*, Benjamin contrasts the self-preserving, self-containing powers of the story, that most ancient bearer of wisdom, with the mere giving-out of information that is *par excellence* the role of the newspaper.

In 'The Author as Producer' (paradoxically, probably composed earlier than 'The Storyteller') a change of enormous scale is evident in his thinking. The newspaper, or at least the contemporary Soviet newspaper, Benjamin here describes as a 'vast melting-down process' which 'not only destroys the conventional separation between genres, between writer and poet, scholar and popularizer' but 'questions even the separation between author and reader'. The 'place where the word is most debased—that is to say, the newspaper—becomes the very place where a rescue operation can be mounted'.

The Chinese wall newspaper of the Cultural Revolution, the posters, inscriptions and roneoed sheets of the Parisian (and other) students in 1968, all bear Benjamin out and make this once melancholy, meta-physical *littérateur* into the foremost revolutionary and radical critic of the nineteen-sixties and seventies. The spread of street-theatre, agitprop, 'interaction' likewise vindicate Benjamin's and Brecht's views of the theatre. At the same time their enthusiasm and radicalism conceal a potentially harmful one-sidedness. Thus the very democratization of art by means of the media of reproduction is used to oust and reject all traditional forms of art associated with a division of performer and audience, owner and onlooker. Benjamin simply identifies 'aura', the aesthetic nimbus surrounding a work of art, with property, and mechanical reproduction with proletarianization. Of course, mechanical reproduction can be and is abused and absorbed by capitalism, and Benjamin was an early, perceptive diagnostician of this danger. As a preventive (or, if necessary, a cure) he argued for the social control of the media. In this there was nothing new. What was challenging was the suggestion that such social control would create new forms of art; more, that the politicization of the media was the same as the politicization of art. In other words, media and art were identified. The old distinction between form and content was abolished; form itself became political.

By thus collapsing content into form, the range of forms may be restricted. Because Benjamin was the child of the first phase of a new technological era, when techniques like photo-montage had a direct political effect, he sometimes tended to isolate technique as politically effective in itself and to ignore that the politicization of technology involves the relations, as well as the means, of production.

At the same time as he championed the 'bad new things', Benjamin's philosophy of history, as we have seen, required a constant battle on behalf of the past, on behalf of its victims. He sought to solve this contradiction with the concept of *Jetztzeit*, ('the presence of the now'), a *now stands*, in which time stands still, where past and future converge not harmoniously, but explosively, in the present instant.

This concept of *Jetztzeit*, together with that of *Ermattungstaktik* ('tactics of attrition'), were the two ideas or predispositions that dominated Benjamin's thinking during his last years. *Jetztzeit* entailed the ability to intervene in events, whether as politician or intellectual, to 'blast open the continuum of history' (Sixteenth Thesis on the Philosophy of History). The idea is important in view of the progressivist, evolutionist, determinist traditions of Social Democracy on the one hand, which Benjamin explicitly attacked in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'; and the 'Utopian' positivism and pragmatism of the Soviet Union under Stalin on the other. In linking the idea of *Jetztzeit* with the Socialist revolutionary movement Benjamin joins ranks with Gramsci and the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness* (one of the Marxist texts which most influenced him).

The other idea or attitude, *Ermattungstaktik*, Brecht described in a poem full of pessimism written after Benjamin's death:

*Ermattungstaktik war's, was dir bebagte
Am Schachisch sitzend in des Birnbaums Schatten.
Der Feind, der dich von deinen Büchern jagte
Lässt sich von unsreinem nicht ermatten.*

(Tactics of attrition are what you enjoyed
Sitting at the chess table in the pear tree's shade.
The enemy who drove you from your books
Will not be worn down by the likes of us.)

The philosophy of *Ermattung* dominates Benjamin's writings on Brecht, the belief that in the end 'the hard thing gives way'. The dialectical essence of Benjamin's thought lies in the polarity of *Jetztzeit* and *Ermattung*; the 'Messianic' intervention in, and control over, history (however small the proportions and shortlived the duration), the expectation, expressed in the last 'Thesis on the Philosophy of History', that 'every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might come', and the sober, sage-like, patient wearing down of hardness. It was this sense of expectation that Benjamin's friend and contemporary Ernst Bloch translated into the category of 'concrete Utopia' or the ontological principle of hope.

Bloch wrote of Benjamin's suicide that it was 'a kind of parting with life not so uncharacteristic of him, if one thinks of a phrase of his which I recall: "Least of all has one power over a dead man"'. In a similar vein Brecht wrote in a second poem on his friend's death:

*Zuletzt an eine unüberschreitbare Grenze getrieben
Hast du, heisst es, eine überschreitbare überschritten*

(In the end driven to an impassable frontier
You, we hear, passed over a passable one.)

Benjamin committed suicide at Port Bou on the Franco-Spanish frontier, in September 1940, on hearing that he was likely to be handed over to the Gestapo the following day. Brecht remarked, when he received the news of his death, that this was the first real loss that Hitler had caused to German literature.

Stanley Mitchell

Conversations with Brecht

1934—27 September Dragør In a conversation a few evenings ago Brecht spoke of the curious indecision which at the moment prevents him from making any definite plans. As he is the first to point out, the main reason for this indecision is that his situation is so much more privileged than that of most other refugees. Therefore, since in general he scarcely admits that emigration can be a proper basis for plans and projects, he refuses all the more radically to admit it as such in his own particular case. His plans reach out to the period beyond emigration. There, he is faced with two alternatives. On the one hand there are some prose projects waiting to be done: the shorter one of the *Ui*—a satire on Hitler in the style of the Renaissance biographers—and the long one of the *Tui* novel. This is to be an encyclopedic survey of the follies of the Intellectual-Ins (intellectuals); it seems that it will be set, in part at least, in China. A small model for this work is already completed. But besides these prose projects he is also preoccupied by others, dating back to very old studies and ideas. Whereas he was able, at a pinch, to set down in his notes and introductions to the *Versuche*

the thoughts which occurred to him within the scope of epic theatre, other thoughts, although originating in the same interests, have become combined with his study of Leninism and also of the scientific tendencies of the empiricists, and have therefore outgrown that rather limited framework. For several years they have been subsumed, now under one key concept, now under another, so that non-Aristotelian logic, behaviourist theory, the new encyclopedia and the critique of ideas have, in turn, stood at the centre of his preoccupations. At present these various pursuits are converging upon the idea of a philosophical didactic poem. But he has doubts about the matter. He wonders, in the first instance, whether, in view of his output to date and especially of its satirical elements, particularly the *Threepenny Novel*, the public would accept such a work. This doubt is made up of two distinct strands of thought. Whilst becoming more closely concerned with the problems and methods of the proletarian class struggle, he has increasingly doubted the satirical and especially the ironic attitude as such. But to confuse these doubts, which are mostly of a practical nature, with other, more profound ones would be to misunderstand them. The doubts at a deeper level concern the artistic and playful element in art; and above all those elements which, partially and occasionally, make art refractory to reason. Brecht's heroic efforts to legitimize art *vis-à-vis* reason have again and again referred him to the parable in which artistic mastery is proved by the fact that, in the end, all the artistic elements of a work cancel each other out. And it is precisely these efforts, connected with this parable, which are at present coming out in a more radical form in the idea of the didactic poem. In the course of the conversation I tried to explain to Brecht that such a poem would not have to seek approval from a bourgeois public but from a proletarian one, which, presumably, would find its criteria less in Brecht's earlier, partly bourgeois-oriented work than in the dogmatic and theoretical content of the didactic poem itself. 'If this didactic poem succeeds in enlisting the authority of marxism on its behalf,' I told him, 'then your earlier work is not likely to weaken that authority.'

4 October Yesterday Brecht left for London. Whether it is that my presence offers peculiar temptations in this respect, or whether Brecht is now generally more this way inclined than before, at all events his aggressiveness (which he himself calls 'baiting') is now much more pronounced in conversation than it used to be. Indeed, I am struck by a special vocabulary engendered by this aggressiveness. In particular, he is fond of using the term *Würstchen* (little sausage). In Dragør I was reading Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. To start with he blamed this choice of reading for my being unwell. As confirmation he told how, in his youth, a prolonged illness (which had doubtless been latent for a long time) had begun when a schoolfellow had played Chopin to him on the piano and he had not had the strength to protest. Brecht thinks that Chopin and Dostoyevsky have a particularly adverse effect on people's health. In other ways, too, he missed no opportunity of needling me about my reading matter, and as he himself was reading *Schweyk* at the time he insisted on making comparative value judgements of the two authors. It became evident that Dostoyevsky simply could not measure up to Hašek, and Brecht included him without further ado among the *Würstchen*; only a little more and he would have

extended to Dostoyevsky the description he keeps ready, these days, for any work which lacks an enlightening character, or is denied such character by him: he calls such a work a *Klump* (lump, or clot).

1938—28 June I was in a labyrinth of stairs. This labyrinth was not entirely roofed over. I climbed; other stairways led downwards. On a landing I realized that I had arrived at a summit. A wide view of many lands opened up before me. I saw other men standing on other peaks. One of these men was suddenly seized by dizziness and fell. The dizziness spread; others were now falling from other peaks into the depths below. When I too became dizzy I woke up.

On 22 June I arrived at Brecht's.

Brecht speaks of the elegance and nonchalance of Virgil's and Dante's basic attitude, which, he says, forms the backdrop to Virgil's majestic *gestus*. He calls both Virgil and Dante '*promoters*'. Emphasizing the classic rank of the *Inferno*, he says: 'You can read it out of doors.'

He speaks of his deep-rooted hatred of priests, a hatred he inherited from his grandmother. He hints that those who have appropriated the theoretical doctrines of Marx and taken over their management will always form a clerical camarilla. Marxism lends itself all too easily to 'interpretation'. Today it is a hundred years old and what do we find? (At this point the conversation was interrupted.) "The State must wither away." Who says that? 'The State.' (Here he can only mean the Soviet Union.) He assumes a cunning, furtive expression, puts himself in front of the chair in which I am sitting—he is impersonating 'the State'—and says, with a sly, side-long glance at an imaginary interlocutor: 'I know I *ought* to wither away.'

A conversation about new Soviet novels. We no longer read them. The talk then turns to poetry and to the translations of poems from various languages in the USSR with which *Das Wort* is flooded. He says the poets over there are having a hard time. 'If Stalin's name doesn't crop up in a poem, that's interpreted as a sign of ill intent.'

29 June Brecht talks about epic theatre, and mentions plays acted by children in which faults of performance, operating as alienation effects, impart epic characteristics to the production. Something similar may occur in third-rate provincial theatre. I mention the Geneva production of *Le Cid* where the sight of the king's crown worn crookedly on his head gave me the first inkling of the ideas I eventually developed in the *Transspiel* book nine years later. Brecht in turn quoted the moment at which the idea of epic theatre first came into his head. It happened at a rehearsal for the Munich production of *Edward II*. The battle in the play is supposed to occupy the stage for three-quarters of an hour. Brecht couldn't stage-manage the soldiers, and neither could Asya (Lacia), his production assistant. Finally he turned in despair to Karl Valentin, at that time one of his closest friends, who was attending the rehearsal, and asked him: 'Well, what is it? What's the truth about these soldiers? What *about* them?' Valentin: 'They're pale, they're scared, that's what!' The remark settled the issue, Brecht adding: 'They're tired.' Where-

upon the soldiers' faces were thickly made up with chalk, and that was the day the production's style was determined.

Later the old subject of 'logical positivism' came up. I adopted a somewhat intransigent attitude and the conversation threatened to take a disagreeable turn. This was avoided by Brecht admitting for the first time that his arguments were superficial. This he did with the delightful formula: 'A deep need makes for a superficial grasp.' Later, when we were walking to his house (the conversation had taken place in my room): 'It's a good thing when someone who has taken up an extreme position then goes into a period of reaction. That way he arrives at a half-way house.' That, he explained, was what had happened to him: he had become mellow.

1 July Whenever I refer to conditions in Russia, Brecht's comments are highly sceptical. When I inquired the other day whether Ottwald was still in gaol (in colloquial German: whether he was 'still sitting'), the answer was: 'If he can still sit, he's sitting.' Yesterday Gretl Steffin expressed the opinion that Tretyakov was no longer alive.

4 July Brecht in the course of a conversation on Baudelaire last night: 'I'm not against the asocial, you know; I'm against the non-social.'

21 July The publications of Lukács, Kurella *et al* are giving Brecht a good deal of trouble. He thinks, however, that one ought not to oppose them at the theoretical level. I then put the question on the political level. Here he does not hold his punches. 'Socialist economy doesn't need war, and that is why it is opposed to war. The "peace-loving nature of the Russian people" is an expression of this and nothing else. There can't be a socialist economy in one country. Rearmament has inevitably set the Russian proletariat a long way back in history, back to stages of historical development which have long since been overtaken—among others, the monarchic stage. Russia is now under personal rule. Only blockheads can deny this, of course.' This was a short conversation which was soon interrupted—I should add that in this context Brecht emphasized that as a result of the dissolution of the First International, Marx and Engels lost active contact with the working-class movement and thereafter gave only advice—of a private nature, not intended for publication—to individual leaders. Nor was it an accident—although regrettable—that Engels at the end of his life turned to the natural sciences.

Béla Kun, he said, was his greatest admirer in Russia. Brecht and Heine were the only German poets Kun studied [*sic*]. (Occasionally Brecht hints at the existence of a certain person on the Central Committee who supports him.)

25 July Yesterday morning Brecht came over to my place to read me his Stalin poem, which is entitled 'The Peasant to his Ox'. At first I did not get its meaning completely, and when a moment later the thought of Stalin passed through my head, I did not dare entertain it. This was more or less the effect Brecht intended, and he explained what he meant in the conversation which followed. In this conversation he emphasized,

among other things, the positive aspects of the poem. It was in fact a poem in honour of Stalin, who in his opinion has immense merit. But Stalin is not yet dead. Besides, a different, more enthusiastic manner of honouring Stalin is not incumbent upon Brecht, who is sitting in exile and waiting for the Red Army to march in. He is following the developments in Russia and also the writings of Trotsky. These prove that there exists a suspicion—a justifiable one—demanding a sceptical appraisal of Russian affairs. Such scepticism is in the spirit of the Marxist classics. Should the suspicion prove correct one day, then it will become necessary to fight the regime, and *publicly*. But, 'unfortunately or God be praised, whichever you prefer', the suspicion is at present not yet a certainty. There is no justification for constructing upon it a policy such as Trotsky's. 'And then there's no doubt that certain criminal cliques really are at work on Russia itself. One can see it, from time to time, by the harm they do.' Finally Brecht pointed out that we Germans have been especially affected by the setbacks we have suffered in our own country. 'We have had to pay for the stand we took, we're covered with scars. It's only natural that we should be especially sensitive.'

Towards evening Brecht found me in the garden reading *Capital*. Brecht: 'I think it's very good that you're studying Marx just now, at a time when one comes across him less and less, especially among our people.' I replied that I prefer studying the most talked-about authors when they are out of fashion. We went on to discuss Russian literary policy. I said, referring to Lukács, Gábor and Kurella: 'These people just aren't anything to write home about' (literally: with these people you can't make state). Brecht: 'Or rather, a State is all you *can* make with them, but not a community. They are, to put it bluntly, enemies of production. Production makes them uncomfortable. You never know where you are with production; production is the unforeseeable. You never know what's going to come out. And they themselves don't want to produce. They want to play the *apparatchik* and exercise control over other people. Every one of their criticisms contains a threat.' We then got on to Goethe's novels, I don't remember how; Brecht knows only the *Elective Affinities*. He said that what he admired about it was the author's youthful elegance. When I told him Goethe wrote this novel at the age of sixty, he was very much surprised. The book, he said, had nothing philistine about it. That was a tremendous achievement. He knew a thing or two about philistinism; all German drama, including the most significant works, was stamped with it. I remarked that *Elective Affinities* had been very badly received when it came out. Brecht: 'I'm pleased to hear it—The Germans are a lousy nation (*ein Scheissvolk*). It isn't true that one must not draw conclusions from Hitler about Germans in general. In me, too, everything that is German is bad. The intolerable thing about us Germans is our narrow-minded independence. Nowhere was there such a thing as the free cities of the German Reich, like that lousy Augsburg. Lyons was never a free city; the independent cities of the Renaissance were city states—Lukács is a German by choice. He's got no stuffing left in him, none whatsoever.'

Speaking of *The Most Beautiful Legends of Weymouth the Brigand* by Anna Seghers, Brecht praised the book because it shows that Seghers is no

longer writing to order. 'Seghers can't produce to order, just as, without an order, I wouldn't even know how to start writing.' He also praised the stories for having a rebellious, solitary figure as their central character.

26 July Brecht, last night: 'There can't be any doubt about it any longer: the struggle against ideology has become a new ideology.'

29 July Brecht read to me some polemical texts he has written as part of his controversy with Lukács, studies for an essay which is to be published in *Das Wort*. He asked my advice whether to publish them. As, at the same time, he told me that Lukács's position 'over there' is at the moment very strong, I told him I could offer no advice. 'There are questions of power involved. You ought to get the opinion of somebody from over there. You've got friends there, haven't you?'—Brecht: 'Actually, no, I haven't. Neither have the Muscovites themselves—like the dead.'

3 August On 29 July in the evening, while we were in the garden, the conversation came round to the question whether a part of the *Children's Songs* cycle should be included in the new volume of poems. I was not in favour because I thought that the contrast between the political and the private poems made the experience of exile particularly explicit, and this contrast would be diminished by the inclusion of a disparate sequence. In saying this I probably implied that the suggestion once again reflected the destructive aspect of Brecht's character, which puts everything in danger almost before it has been achieved. Brecht: 'I know; they'll say of me that I was manic. If the history of our time is handed down to the future, the capacity to understand my mania will be handed down with it. The times we live in will make a backdrop to my mania. But what I should really like would be for people to say about me: he was a moderate manic.'—His discovery of moderation? Brecht said, should find expression in the poetry volume: the recognition that life goes on despite Hitler, that there will always be children. He was thinking of the 'epoch without history' of which he speaks in his poem addressed to artists. A few days later he told me he thought the coming of such an epoch more likely than victory over fascism. But then he added, with a vehemence he rarely shows, yet another argument in favour of including the *Children's Songs* in the *Poems from Exile*: 'We must neglect nothing in our struggle against that lot. What they're planning is nothing small, make no mistake about it. They're planning for thirty thousand years ahead. Colossal things. Colossal crimes. They stop at nothing. They're out to destroy everything. Every living cell contracts under their blows. That is why we too must think of everything. They cripple the baby in the mother's womb. We must on no account leave out the children.' While he was speaking like this I felt a power being exercised over me which was equal in strength to the power of fascism—I mean a power that sprang from the depths of history no less deep than the power of the fascists. It was a very curious feeling, and new to me. Then Brecht's thoughts took another turn, which further intensified this feeling I had. 'They're planning devastations on an icy scale. That's why they can't reach agreement with the Church, which is also geared to thousands of years. And they're

proletarianized me too. It isn't just that they've taken my house, my fish-pond and my car from me; they've also robbed me of my stage and my audience. From where I stand today I can't, as a matter of principle, admit that Shakespeare's talent was greater than mine. But Shakespeare couldn't have written just for his desk drawer, any more than I can. Besides, he had his characters in front of him. The people he depicted were running around in the streets. He just observed their behaviour and picked out a few traits; there were many others, just as important, that he left out.'

Early August 'In Russia there is dictatorship *over* the proletariat. We should avoid dissociating ourselves from this dictatorship for as long as it still does useful work for the proletariat—i.e. so long as it contributes towards an agreement between the proletariat and the peasantry, with predominant recognition of proletarian interests.' A few days later Brecht spoke of a 'workers' monarchy', and I compared this organism with certain grotesque sports of nature dredged up from the depths of the sea in the form of horned fish or other monsters.

25 August A Brechtian maxim: 'Don't start from the good old things but the bad new ones.'

Translated by Anna Bostock

Acknowledgement Stanley Mitchell's 'Introduction' and these excerpts from Benjamin's 'Conversations with Brecht' have been taken from NLS's forthcoming volume of all Benjamin's published writings on Brecht *Understanding Brecht*, NLS, £2.25.

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Japan and America: Antagonistic Allies

The 'Nixon Shocks' of 1971, which announced the opening of relations between the us and China and initiated a series of measures to protect the us economy, had an immense combined impact in Japan.¹ As America's main economic rival, Japan was the most threatened of all the major capitalist economies by Nixon's protectionism. The immediate result of the 'Nixon shocks' has been a considerable increase in Japanese diplomatic and political moves in East and South-East Asia; these had lagged strikingly far behind its economic advances in the area. The development of Japan's international role will be one of the central features of imperialism, and of inter-imperialist contradictions, in the last quarter of the 20th century. Japan has already had one period of notable expansion in the East and South-East Asia area this century. This new expansion is not a simple re-run of the previous episode. Post-1945 Japan has been to a considerable extent remoulded by us imperialism and integrated into the American empire. As a consequence Japan has so far been able to advance in Asia almost entirely by economic means: neither political nor military measures

have been in the front line. Contemporary expansion contrasts strongly with the pre-1945 experience, where military power was, to a very large extent, in the vanguard.

Japan's gigantic economic stake in South-East Asia has both strengthened its bargaining position vis-à-vis the us, and laid the basis for renewed political and military activity in the area. The us is supporting this trend. For, although Japan is the us's strongest trade competitor on the domestic us market, postwar Japanese imperialism has been forged in the image of its conquerors and the fact of conquest remains. The Security Treaty gives America powers approximating to those of an occupation, as top Washington leaks have recently been emphasizing.² Furthermore, up until May 1972, the us was in fact occupying a part of Japan as a colony and was able to use its hold on Okinawa as a bargaining counter in economic, political and military negotiations (and, by hanging on to so many installations in the Ryukyus, probably can go on doing so for some time). Here we shall try to resume briefly the sometimes paradoxical strengths and weaknesses of the uneasy relationship between Japan and America, starting with its most striking component—trade.

At present Japan depends on the us for about 30 per cent of its trade: in 1970 Japan sent 33.7 per cent of its exports to the United States, and took 34.4 per cent of its imports from there (as against figures of only 28.2 and 28 per cent, respectively, for the whole of Asia and the Middle East). The us, on the other hand, sent only 14.7 per cent of its exports to, and took 10.8 per cent of its imports from, Japan in 1970.³ But there is a significant difference in the structure of each country's exports to the other. In 1970, 72 per cent of Japan's sales to America were heavy industry and chemical products; 24 per cent were light industrial products, and a mere 4 per cent were raw materials. Of the us's exports to Japan in the same year, 58 per cent were made up of food-stuffs and raw materials, 7 per cent of chemicals, and only 25 per cent of machines, instruments and manufactured goods. In other words, the relationship is not unlike that of an industrialized country (Japan) to an underdeveloped one (us). While quantitatively subordinate to the us in terms of its reliance on their mutual trading, Japan is qualitatively the superior of the two in terms of the kind of goods traded.

¹ This article has been adapted from the final chapter of our forthcoming (April 1973) book, *Japanese Imperialism Today* (Penguin in uk; Monthly Review Press in usa). It was originally written in March 1972 and many of the trends indicated have since accelerated quite sharply. The bulk of the book concerns Japan's expansion in South-East Asia. The book also deals in detail with Japan's relationship to the us: certain key aspects of this latter relationship, both economic (e.g. oil, cars, and computers), as well as military and political, are discussed elsewhere in the work and are therefore mentioned here only *in passing*.

² An unnamed White House source, who is unofficially acknowledged to be either Nixon or Kissinger, has at least twice recently stated that one of the purposes of the Security Treaty is to prevent the resurgence of Japanese militarism. A correct emphasis on the dangers of reviving Japanese militarism risks obscuring the fact that it is the us which has largely structured the re-militarization of Japan, and which remains *dominant* in Japanese military actions. The Japanese army is considerably more subordinate to the us than is, say, the West German army.

³ *Japan Economic Journal*, no. 476, 8 February 1972. Information below from same.

In addition, and because of the greater value of their products, by 1971 Japan ran a fairly large trading surplus with the us—more than \$2 billion, which accounted for about 30 per cent of Japan's total trading surplus for the year. By 1972 the bilateral trade deficit for the us was expected to reach \$4 billion.⁴ As a consequence of this and trading surpluses with other countries, Japan has seen the recent multiplication of the country's reserves: they rose from \$7,927 million at the end of July 1970 to \$12,514 million at the end of August 1971, putting Japan ahead of the United States. They rose again to \$15,235 million by the end of that year, and in December 1972 Japan's total reserves (official plus hidden) came to \$23-24 billion.

The vast majority of the reserves is composed of dollars, at present not convertible; Japan has always had very low gold reserves. Thus it does not have complete control over its surplus whose main function is to prop up the dollar. It may well be that almost the totality of Japan's reserves have never left the shores of the United States, and are not really 'reserves' for Japan at all—but for the Americans. It must therefore be emphasized that Japan's failure to buy gold and other non-dollar currencies can only be interpreted as a sign of weakness and subordination to the us.⁵ Nor is it clear what legal mechanism, if any, or what agreement, if any, has been used to prevent Japan acquiring gold. However the fact that it has not moved out of dollars is the most striking reminder of Japan's overall situation.

America Hits Back

The dynamic behind the accumulation of these reserves threatened the us and they set out to deflect Japan's international expansion, even while they fuelled it via Vietnam. Europe is now feeling the bite of Japanese exports as Tokyo switched sales to the EEC. The Japanese have built up a \$1 billion surplus with the Common Market in five years. While this strengthens Japan both directly and in terms of diversifying its markets, it also, of course, assists the us by weakening their other major competitor. There is only room here for analysis of the contest between the two Pacific powers, but one of the key advantages the us has in its fight with Japan is its other world-wide interests.

With these interests behind it, the us government counteracted sharply in a number of ways. These can, roughly, be broken down into two groups: measures to restrict Japanese imports into the United States, and measures to increase American penetration of Japan.

The us government has leant mercilessly on Japan to cut back its trade surplus. Treasury Secretary Connally called on Japan to make up some 40 per cent (i.e. \$5 billion) of the \$13 billion turnaround which, he alleged, was needed in the American balance of trade. One of the simplest ways a contribution could be made, it was repeatedly pointed out, would be if Japan would increase its purchases of American military equipment. It is reported that under great pressure Japan

⁴ *New York Times*, 11 December 1972.

⁵ Prof. Inoue Kiyoshi has stressed this to us in private conversation.

agreed to double its purchases in 1972. It has also agreed to pay all the foreign-exchange costs of keeping us bases in Japan.⁶

The December 1971 currency realignment meant an effective devaluation of the dollar against the yen of 16.88 per cent; in the first place this makes Japanese exports to the us more expensive (although minus the 10 per cent surcharge) and us exports into Japan relatively cheaper. But it also makes it more expensive for American firms to buy into the Japanese economy, and cheaper for Japanese firms to invest in America (and other places).

The most publicized protectionist measures by the Nixon Administration have been connected with textiles. In order to repay his political debt to Strom Thurmond, Nixon went down the line to impose a particularly harsh and stupid programme restricting textile imports from the major South-East Asian producers: five-year agreements were imposed on Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, and a three-year agreement on Japan, pegging increases in detail, by type of product, to tiny amounts per annum. By this deal, Nixon paid off Thurmond and his southern textile backers and undercut some of the support for Wallace and Wilbur Mills. The textile fight, which was of little economic importance to the United States, was a striking indication of the fact that the United States still calls the shots for Japan when the chips are down. The textile industry is economically and politically extremely powerful inside Japan (even though it is a declining industry): but it failed to get the terms of the agreement modified in the slightest way. In the end the Sato regime was simply obliged to let some 300,000 people be thrown out of work – although the government did mobilize a sizeable sum of money for emergency relief for the industry.⁷

Other commodities are in fact of much greater economic importance to the Americans: steel, cars, tv sets, for example. The Americans wheeled out a veritable arsenal of countermeasures, ranging from special credit schemes for domestic producers, to tax rebates, tariffs, quotas and even the threat of employing the Trading With the Enemy Act to repel Japanese goods.⁸ As a result, the Japanese agreed first to 'voluntary

⁶ *Newsmag*, 27 December 1971, p. 13. To our knowledge, this has not been officially made explicit. The precise figure for arms purchases is not clear. At the time of Connally's visit the Japanese were suggesting they might spend about \$540 million in 1972 for American arms—about 80 per cent of the figure America wanted (*Japan Economic Journal*, no. 462, 2 November 1971, p. 8).

⁷ After the voluntary restrictions programme came into effect on 1 July 1971, the Tokyo government allotted ¥75,100 million relief for the textile industry; after revaluation a further ¥127,800 million (£158 million) was set aside for the industry. On the textile dispute cf. Jon Halliday, 'Washington v. Tokyo', *NIA*, no. 67, 1971.

⁸ This is a law dating from the First World War, and originally resuscitated to prevent private American interests investing abroad against the us government's wishes. The textile dispute with Japan was the first time it had been invoked in such a context—with predictable results (*The Times*, 28 September 1971; cf. *International Herald Tribune*, 6 October 1971 for a sober American assessment of the damage done by the move). At a us-Japanese business gathering in Hawaii in September 1971, the American side handed round the lyrics from a southern ballad, *The Import Blues*, a laid-off racist mill-hand laments: 'Now the people of Jay-pan have it made. They make cheap-John goods in a sleazy style.' Even his wife, he complains, wears minis produced by 'slant-eyed people of the country of the Rising Sun flag' (*Times*, 4 October 1971).

restrictions' in, for example, steel exports. Then, the Americans hit them with the 10 per cent surcharge, and finally with the forced revaluation of the yen.

Investment War

America would like not only to cut down Japanese exports to the States; it would also like to increase us exports to Japan, and American investment in Japan. The recent economic dispute between the two countries was usually referred to exclusively as a trade war, whereas it was also an investment war. Japan is still the fastest growing capitalist economy in the world, and it is only natural that American capital is very much attracted to it. This was underlined during the recent American recession when us companies and holdings in Europe (where the economy grew much faster than in the us itself) helped restore badly depleted profit margins at home.

Until very recently Japan kept very tight controls over foreign capital coming into Japan. In the car sector, for example, maximum foreign participation was restricted to 33 per cent for a number of years ahead. In other existing industries the ceiling was 50 per cent—although in new industries it was set at 100 per cent. Other restrictions on the repatriation of capital contributed to keeping foreign interests out of Japan in most sectors, except oil. Throughout the negotiations over Okinawa and the textile fight the Americans kept hammering away at these restrictions on foreign investment, which have been Japan's number one line of defence in safeguarding its autonomy.

In October 1971 the Americans scored a major breakthrough when Superscope Inc. was allowed to acquire 50 per cent of Standard Radio Corporation: this was the first time the Japanese government had sanctioned acquisition of 50 per cent of the stock of a domestic electronic firm; and MITI announced formally that such deals would continue to be approved 'if foreign firms are willing to comply with government conditions.'⁹ More recently, in the crucial field of video-cassettes, the giant 3-M corporation has made a joint deal with Sony.

Ironically, too, the us has now reached a situation where it would like Japan to bring investment to America. The self-interested actions of the Detroit motor manufacturers are already in danger of boomeranging: in early 1972 the United Auto Workers union announced a boycott of some of the products of the Detroit-Japan automobile tie-ups unless the American firms brought their investment back to the States. Japanese textile manufacturers have even set up in North Carolina! It is easily forgotten that one of the objectives of American trade policy (tariffs, quotas, etc) is to force Japanese capital into the United States—investment means not only profits, but also jobs. The Japanese are not entirely unhappy about this situation. The government, in this case MITI, has given its attention and backing to a general plan to boost

⁹ *The Times*, 30 October 1971. MITI is the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

investment in the States on a long-term basis. The government is extending the overseas investment insurance cover to Japanese ventures in the industrialized countries—'to include losses resulting from strikes or other troubles peculiar to advanced countries'.¹⁰

Japan is also being pressured to put several billion dollars back into the us economy by buying either us Treasury bills, or medium and long-term bonds—perhaps to about the same level as Canada (\$2,290 million as of July 1971).¹¹ Of course, this is only another way of Washington forcing its allies to prop up the American economy. But Japan does not have much alternative, particularly while the dollar is not convertible.

Investment and Trade

It has long been acknowledged that capital investment overseas is not an essential or perhaps even basic feature of contemporary imperialism.¹² Emmanuel argues that it never was.¹³ At any rate, it is obvious that the relationship between the us and Japan has involved trade as well as investment competitiveness—and trade has been, up until the last few years, much more important in Japan's relationship with South-East Asia than has investment. Japan has been running bigger and bigger trade surpluses with its neighbours, especially with South Korea and Taiwan; and this imbalance, which is structurally not eliminable under the present imperialist arrangement, has to be maintained by repeated infusions of Japanese capital in the form of credits, loans (and earlier, 'reparations'). The relationship between capital and production is not exclusively one of investment, much less investment abroad.¹⁴

Nonetheless, a revealing index of both Japan's governmental backing for the drive to develop overseas investment and control over sources of raw materials and of the extent of America's desire to draw Japan into its plans, is given by the various investment guarantee projects recently operationalized or mooted. On 15 May 1970 the Japanese government set up an insurance system for Japanese investment overseas. This guaranteed to make up to 90 per cent of losses 'from foreign political or credit troubles'.¹⁵ In fiscal 1972 ¥350 billion were set aside for the fund (\$1,136 million). In other words, the Japanese government has given a cast-iron guarantee to any private interests who will invest in approved sectors abroad. But Japan has realized it cannot possibly go it alone. In November 1971 Tokyo hosted a

¹⁰ JEJ, no. 476, 8 February 1972, p. 10, p. 1.

¹¹ This was the figure being suggested at the time of the Connally visit in late 1971—before revaluation (JEJ, no. 462, p. 8). It may well have risen since then and the kind of bonds also may differ (see *The Times*, 9 March 1972).

¹² On this, see Hamza Alavi, 'Imperialism Old and New', *Socialist Register*, 1962, p. 121; and Rodolfo Banfi, 'A proposito di Imperialismo di Lenin', *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, no. 23, 1964, pp. 424-5.

¹³ Arghiri Emmanuel, 'White-Settler Colonialism and the Myth of Investment Imperialism', *NLR*, no. 73, 1972, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ On this, see Banfi, op. cit.

¹⁵ JEJ, no. 476, 8 February 1972, p. 10.

UN-sponsored conference on advanced capitalist countries' investment in the developing countries, at which Japan's role in the *relatively* integrated exploitation of the third world was a major topic.¹⁶ Immediately after this it was announced from Washington that the US and Japan were about to launch a mammoth worldwide investment insurance body, via the World Bank. Japanese investment abroad, lamented William Rogers, had been enjoying a 'honeymoon period' in that it had not faced expropriation to the same extent as American investors had. He called for a 'multilateral approach' to insure capitalist investments throughout the world. The Japanese agreed 'that it would be desirable to establish an international investment programme supported by industrial nations and developing countries'.¹⁷ The upshot of Rogers's blunt suggestion is clearly that the US wants to establish closer control over the forthcoming burst of overseas investment which is bound to come out of Japan.

In addition to these moves in quasi-antagonistic co-operation with the US, Japan is looking for other ways to utilize its vast reserves. The natural move is to step up direct investment overseas, and there is every sign that this is in the process of increasing by leaps and bounds. The sheer size of the Siberia deal offered by Moscow would have been unthinkable only a couple of years ago. At the end of February 1972 the well-informed Kyodo news service reported that the Japanese government was planning to solve some of its surplus foreign exchange problem by lending some of the reserves to private businesses and banks for investment overseas.¹⁸ This would complement the existing government guarantees and accelerate overseas investment.

A Yen Union

The experience of being dependent on the dollar has been a very nasty one. The overwhelming percentage of Japan's business contracts were in dollars, and many sectors of business would have lost substantial sums of money through the December 1971 revaluation arrangement had the government not come to their assistance with lavish support funds. One obvious way out of the predicament would be to establish the yen as an international currency, sign contracts in it and deal in it in most or all foreign transactions. There is a still unresolved debate going on about this in Japan. On 4 January 1972 a plan for a 'yen settlement union' was cautiously unveiled in Tokyo: this would require the participating South-East Asian countries to deal in yen rather than dollars with Tokyo. In return Japan would offer its most lenient credit to those in the 'settlement union'. This yen economic bloc, wrote the *Guardian* correspondent, is 'reminiscent of the pre-war

¹⁶ *Japan Economic Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, January 1972, p. 8.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 29 September 1971. The following day World Bank president McNamara made a major speech threatening tighter international capitalist intervention, through the World Bank, to protect exploitation and profits (*The Times*, 30 September 1971).

¹⁸ *International Herald Tribune*, 29 February 1972; *The Times*, 9 March 1972. A move to try to convert some of its dollar holdings into SDRs (*Le Monde*, 30 September 1971) would appear to have been frustrated.

"co-prosperity sphere".¹⁹ A few weeks later Finance Minister Mizuta let it be known that he did not favour an international role for the yen. Britain, he pointed out, had suffered 'extreme hardships' while the pound was the world's major means of trade settlement, and Japan should avoid getting into a similar position.²⁰ The upshot of his remarks was that Japan might not block the gradual advance of the yen as an international currency, which, he implied, would in any case strengthen it. Short of this, Japan can use its reserves not only to boost investment, but also to advance credit to South-East Asian countries, and increase its 'aid' programmes. This may become not only attractive (to Japan) but necessary. The well-honed transformation capacities of the Japanese economy are such that the natural response to the slowdown in world trade and the domestic recession is for Japan to boost its exports—which is in fact what happened.²¹ But with the trade imbalance already acute, Japan can only conciliate the antagonisms aroused by this by advancing more and more money to the regimes on the receiving end of the export drive. As these countries become increasingly hostile to the flood of Japanese exports (a process already well under way), the pressures to oblige Japan to move more and more production to the South-East Asian states will build up—pressures which Japan can easily respond to by exporting more capital.

America's Objectives...

In the recent economic struggle with Japan, the us had fairly clear objectives: first, to protect its own market, which is still much the largest in the world; second, to force Japan to allow more American capital into Japan into the key growth sectors, so that us business could protect its own profit margins (though against the 'national' interest of the us); third, to use its power to force Japan into an increased, but continuingly subordinate relationship with us capital in South-East Asia—with the captive Japanese market as the objective.

It was correctly pointed out by several writers on imperialism that a successful export drive by a competitor of the us would be bound to bring retaliation.²² But us retaliation might well force a slowdown in world trade with boomeranging effects on America itself. In the race to capture competitors' markets, which is becoming more and more important given the level of unemployment and unused production

¹⁹ The *Guardian*, 6 January 1972; a subsequent report (the *Guardian*, 6 March 1972) gives official Japanese estimates that yen-based trade had risen to 13 per cent from 6 per cent only three months earlier. At the time of the penultimate Deutschmark revaluation, Germany was estimated to have had about 80 per cent of its contracts in Deutschmarks; the Japanese figure for shipping in mid-1971 was about 1 per cent. Of course, there are already strong rumours of a further forced revaluation of the yen, which must put a brake on the development of a 'yen bloc'.

²⁰ *The Times*, 27 January 1972.

²¹ A Mitsubishi study of February 1972 showed that the recession had boosted exports. The key sectors of cars, motorcycles and steel products had continued to expand their exports; tv sets and toys had 'slowed down'; chemical products and fertilizers had 'slackened' (*J&J*, no. 478, 22 February 1972, p. 3).

²² See Nicolaus, for example; also Bob Rowthorn, 'Imperialism in the Seventies—Unity or Rivalry?', *NLA*, no. 69, 1971, p. 41.

capacity in most advanced capitalist countries,²³ Japan is better placed than the us to provide government support in planning and credit, and this has enabled Japan to race on again at high speed out of the us-forced recession of 1971: Japanese exports in February 1972 were 25 per cent higher than those for February 1971. It is this capacity to increase exports—a capacity which is certain to continue for quite a long time—that has determined the *form* of Japanese imperialism in the recent phase. It simply has not had to create multi-national companies, or let itself be taken over by American capital to survive.²⁴

... and Japan's

On the whole, Japan, although its own capitalist class exploits its proletariat and foreign workers ruthlessly, has been greatly maligned by its capitalist rivals. For, among the world's 76 biggest exporting nations, Japan stood only 62nd in the ratio of its exports to GNP in 1971.²⁵ Furthermore, it had a much higher percentage of its trade (some 45 per cent in 1970) with the underdeveloped countries than did any other advanced capitalist country. Even by 1975, if generally accepted projections turn out to be true and Japan is then accounting for about 10.5 per cent of total world exports, it will still be below a figure commensurate with its share of total world output: it is now *relatively* a much lesser exporter than France, or Britain, or Holland. Having said that, and repeated that some of Japan's exports, such as textiles, were a threat to no one and nothing, except Nixon's diseased 'Southern strategy', it is necessary to examine what Japan's objectives are at the present stage.

Japan would like to retain maximum control over its own domestic industry, meaning primarily over production; it would also like to keep control of its own large—and still, comparatively, very fast-growing—domestic market. It has long understood that there is no such thing as free trade, but within the distorted terminology used among capitalists, Japan supports free trade.²⁶ As outlined in the October 1971 White Paper on Resources, Japan would also like to take rapid steps to try to control more sources of raw materials, now largely in the hands of its main rivals.

The White Paper pointed out that no less than 44.3 per cent of Japan's

²³ Mandel, *NLR*, no. 59, op. cit., p. 26, discusses the phenomenon of unemployment in inter-imperialist rivalry: will the us try to export its unemployment, and why has it got the highest unemployment rate of the major capitalist economies?

²⁴ Rowthorn, op. cit., p. 37 raises this question, but does not answer it.

²⁵ *Times*, 4 October 1971.

²⁶ The Nixon administration trundled out some very dangerous arguments during the textiles dispute. Textiles, of course, is one of the few industries in which an underdeveloped country can hope to compete with an advanced industrial economy. In October 1971 the House labour committee added an amendment to the minimum wage bill which would seek to limit (and often bar) any exports from 'low wage countries'—defined as those paying 'substantially' less than the us minimum wage (*The Times*, 14 October 1971). A further 'protectionist' move in the air is an AFL-CIO suggestion to pass a bill (originally suggested as a rider to the dollar devaluation bill) to make it less financially attractive for us companies to invest abroad (*The Times*, 2 March 1972). The outlines of a vast, all-embracing protectionism are more than clear.

total imports (up from 38.7 per cent in 1960) was accounted for by raw materials; and dependency is particularly striking towards the great us, Canadian and European corporations that have a stranglehold over present world supplies of oil, copper, nickel, etc. Japan is making a big effort to alter the situation but even if present government plans are fulfilled Japan will still control only 30 per cent of its estimated domestic requirements by 1985.²⁷

As of 1971 Japan was estimated to be living with only something around 20 days' supply of most raw materials for industry available in the country. Oil supplies were enough for 45 days—compared with an average 60-day supply maintained by most other advanced capitalist economies. The government recently announced an official programme to build up the reserves to the 60-day level.²⁸ This extreme dependence on imports has had several consequences: the development of gigantic shipbuilding capacity and a large merchant fleet; an ever-widening search for more raw materials; and an increasing trend towards long-term investment in the actual extraction of these raw materials. The extent of European-American control over the world's mineral resources is given in the table. Japan's fears are not entirely groundless. Long-term co-operation and integration with the centres of international capital remain, therefore, a necessity for Japan.

European-American Capital Control over World Mineral Resources

	Companies	Percentage of world production
Copper	10	70.9%
Nickel	4	74.5%
Aluminium refining	6	82.8%
Crude oil	8	64%

In copper, aluminium and oil, the us controls 40 per cent or more of world output.

Source: MITI, *Tsuho Hokusho, Soron*, 1971, p. 349.

In theory, Japan has three ways out of the present situation: direct deals with the third world producing countries; a big deal with the USSR; or a continuing, essentially subordinate relationship to the United States, as exemplified in the post-1965 carve-up of Indonesia.²⁹

²⁷ *The Times*, 8 October 1971. Cf. JEJ, no. 459, 12 October 1971, pp. 10–11.

²⁸ JEJ, no. 474, 25 January 1972, p. 1. Cf. Miyoshi Shuichi, 'Japan's Resources at a Turning Point', JQ, vol. 18, no. 3, 1971, p. 342.

²⁹ On an earlier occasion when Japanese interests were pondering participation in the development of Siberia, Western oil and gas firms are reported to have exercised colossal, and successful, pressure against this: as the Teikoku Oil Co. was about to commit itself to developing the gas fields at Okha in Sakhalin, Shell offered it a deal to extract gas from Brunel (n.a., 'Japan's Role in the Economic Development of Siberia', *Japan Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1968, pp. 153–4). More recently in Indonesia in spite of intensive Japanese lobbying, big copper resources in West Irian were granted to the us Freeport Sulphur Company rather than to Mitsubishi. Nickel mines in south-central Sulawesi went to International Nickel (Canadian-based) but us-controlled) rather than to the Japanese consortium bidding for them—though Japan did gain some other reportedly rich nickel rights in the Halmahera area (Hayashi Naomichi, 'The Economic Basis for the Revival of Japanese Militarism', *Gendai to Shiro*, 1 October 1970, pp. 283–4). Alcoa (us) has secured bauxite rights on every island except Bintan (where the deposits are worked by the government).

The evidence is that, in most of the South-East Asia area certainly, Japan will continue to be subordinate to the United States. One of the reasons for this is that Japan is still not in a position to exercise the required military surveillance of the area, which is a highly explosive one—and here Japan's continued reliance on American military technology is bound to continue to be of vital importance (even if Japan actually manufactures the hardware itself).

Technology

The question of technology is just as vexed as that of raw materials. Japan is paying out far more on technological imports than it receives. Yet, as the 'borrowed technology' discussion demonstrates, there are definite advantages in purchasing technological know-how from others, provided the terms are strictly controlled. Japan has benefited from its relatively backward situation: the example of the rotary engine, whose basic plan was bought from Wankel for a pittance and then refined by Toyo Kogyo, is only the most striking of many such cases. Against this, on the other hand, one must set the fact that US technological superiority may in some cases have allowed them *de facto* control or veto power in joint ventures where, on paper, the American partner only controlled a small minority of the company.³⁰ The precise situation in many cases, e.g. in the oil and computer industries, is not visible to the public eye, but all Japanese computer companies are now dependent on basic computer patents held by IBM and IBM's terms for renewing these patents involve virtually total access to Japan's independent computer technology. In addition, as Japanese business moves into sectors such as atomic energy for which they need the most advanced technology, their bargaining position weakens and they have to accept direct investment and partnership rather than rely on licensing and copying.

Thus in the financing of external markets and the development of industry in the home market Japanese policy can be expected to move more and more from *undercutting* to *interlocking*. As the President of the Japan Iron and Steel Federation put it, 'Now is the time for us to drop the mean idea of trying to beat foreign competitors and face the reality

and US capital dominates in tin and other mining sectors) ('Indonesia: The Making of a Neo-Colony', *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram*, vol. I, no. 1, August 1969). After several vain attempts at competing with their US rivals, Marubeni Corporation announced in June 1970 that they were linking up with Kaiser Steel to jointly develop coal resources on Sumatra (Hayashi, op. cit.). By mid-1971 US investments accounted for no less than 78.6 per cent of the total foreign investments in mining in Indonesia (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 28 August 1971, p. 48). The same situation prevails in Oil (cf. Caldwell, 'Oil and Imperialism in East Asia', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1971)—yet the bulk of both oil and mineral exports from Indonesia are going and will continue to go to Japan. Independent Japanese investment seems to be powerful only in fisheries, especially shrimps (Yu Yi-ch'ien, *Nihon no Razo*, Tokyo, 1971, pp. 172-5), lumber and certain forms of manufacture.

³⁰ For example, US General Electric controls 12.6 per cent of the Japanese electrical giant Tokyo Shibaura (Toshiba), and was recently reported to be trying to get a 10 per cent share in another large firm, Hitachi. Even a 10-12 per cent share, in the hands of an American mammoth like G.E., can be enough to ensure a high degree of control.

of Japanese interdependence with them'.³¹

Inter-Imperialist Contradictions

As far as inter-imperialist competition is concerned, there are two absolutely central issues: the degree of capital concentration (Lenin's first principle), and the level of technology. Wages, of course, are important: but, as Emmanuel has vividly argued,³² Japan has historically been able to advance technologically without a 'comparable' rise in wages, until very recently.

The relationship between high technology, economies of scale and wage levels lies at the centre of the discussion between Ernest Mandel and Martin Nicolaus about us imperialism.³³ More detailed study is needed before a definitive position can be adopted. In the meantime, the situation can be outlined as follows. The United States still has the overall advantage as far as the size of enterprises is concerned, but it is in the process of being strongly challenged by Japan in several key sectors. In steel, Japan now has the biggest producer in the whole world, Nippon Steel, which overtook us Steel about five years before American predictions had envisaged. In cars, Japan now has the number three firm in terms of output, Toyota. Japan leads the world in shipbuilding. However, several important additional considerations must be introduced. First, the extent of us capital control in the key sectors of the Japanese economy—which is still very much greater than vice versa. Second, the much greater power and penetration of us banks (although Japan is now hurriedly trying to right the balance with mergers and the formation of two giant banking consortia).³⁴ On the other hand, against the strength of the us banks must be set the much greater centralization of the Japanese banking system, and the whole factor of the greater co-ordination between the state and private capital in Japan which allows much better economic planning and swifter government intervention than in the us.³⁵

³¹ Quoted from the *Montreal Star* 24 January 1970 by Stephen Hymer, in his paper 'The United States Multinational Corporations and Japanese Competition in the Pacific,' p. 7, prepared for the Conferencia del Pacifico, Viña del Mar, Chile 1970.

³² Arghiri Emmanuel, *Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade*, London 1972, pp. 122, 128.

³³ Ernest Mandel, 'Where is America Going?', *NLR*, no. 54, 1969; Martin Nicolaus 'The Universal Contradiction' *NLR*, no. 59, 1970; Ernest Mandel, 'The Laws of Uneven Development', *NLR*, no. 59.

³⁴ On the importance of banks, see Nicolaus, *ibid.*; and especially Harry Magdoff 'The Age of Imperialism', *Monthly Review*, vol. 20, no. 5, October 1968, pp. 23-3; (now available as a book entitled *The Age of Imperialism*, New York, 1969).

³⁵ The importance of the co-ordination between private capital and the state in Japan cannot be over-emphasized. The decision to concentrate investment in Japan itself, of course, prevented the 'leakage' of capital abroad as happened in Britain for example. Government intervention can be seen very clearly in the recent textile dispute with America. Although Japan had to concede to the us, the Sato government immediately provided sizeable sums of money to cushion the effect on the industry: and it is quite probable that more advanced sectors of Japanese capital were not entirely unhappy at seeing this declining sector being given half a *coup de grace*—since it was scheduled for gradual elimination anyway. In addition, with the vast government subsidy, a big firm like Mitsubishi moved to get round the us textile restrictions by setting up joint ventures in the Philippines and Singapore, which were exempt from the agreement (*International Herald Tribune*, 17 March 1972). Mitsubishi had the ventures set up by summer 1972. This is a nice case of integrated government 'help' turning an apparent blow into an asset.

It is very easy to fall into an extreme position on the question of the relationship between Japan and the us. Their military and political relationship is *closer* than that between the us and any of its European allies. Until the winter of 1971-2 Japan had no independent foreign policy at all. The Security Treaty gives the us veto rights over Japanese moves. Japan is extremely closely tied to the dollar. In terms of the respective investment in each other's economies, there is no comparison.³⁶ On the other hand, in trading terms, Japan is certainly the toughest capitalist competitor America has had since 1945—but this competition is only acute on the domestic us market. Indeed, elsewhere in the world, there is no reason why the two should not promote their interests in common: Connally offered to help Japan promote its exports to Europe, just as Foster Dulles once arranged to help Japan increase its exports to South-East Asia.

Yet it is also obvious that the relationship between the us and Japan is different from that between other major capitalist powers. In spite of America's influence in Tokyo, it is still not sure of its alleged ally. In a speech in Kansas City in October 1971, Barry Goldwater predicted—without a precise timetable—that Japan would become 'the world's most modern military system, far, far better than ours and far better than the Russians . . . The biggest problems that we face in the Pacific in the coming years rest neither with China nor with the Soviets. They rest with Japan.'³⁷

In the wake of the 'Nixon shocks' Japan has definitely found itself obliged to start playing poker on its own. It has moved on the question of a Peace Treaty with the Soviet Union, which had been stalled since the war. It broke with its American ally for the first time to recognize Bangladesh. It sent an official mission to Hanoi, headed by a senior Foreign Ministry official. It recognized Mongolia. It allowed a Diet delegation, headed by a member from the ruling party, to visit North Korea and initiate a trade settlement of the kind negotiated originally with China in 1962.³⁸ It has certainly allowed the issue of massive participation in Siberia to be floated. And it let the Americans know that it would revise its trade policy towards China and compete with the us there wherever possible.³⁹

³⁶ Direct us investment in Japan at the end of 1970 (preliminary estimate) was \$1,491 million and assets amounted to \$7,237 million. Japanese direct investment in the us at the end of 1970 came to \$253 million—up from \$181 million in 1968 and \$176 million in 1969 (*Survey of Current Business*, October 1971, pp. 28, 38).

³⁷ *International Herald Tribune*, 6 October 1971. Goldwater should not be dismissed as an observer of no reliability, since he is known to keep in excellent contact with the us air force, which should be in a position to assess the Japanese challenge.

³⁸ On Japan's relations with the DRV, see *Le Monde*, 8 February 1972 and JFJ, no. 478, 22 February 1972, p. 2 (where Pham Van Dong is reported having suggested the setting up of 'representative offices' in Hanoi and Tokyo); on relations with the DPRK, see JFJ, no. 5, 1972 and JFJ, no. 478, p. 12 (for the setting up of a North Korean trade corporation in Tokyo; Japan is also scheduled to lift its ban on Export-Import Bank guarantees for loans to Japan-DPRK trade—cf. below re China).

³⁹ Selig Harrison noted that it was after Sato heard that American businessmen would be allowed to the 1972 Spring Canton Fair that the Tokyo regime lifted its ban on Export-Import Bank low-interest loans to China, which had been at the origin of the *démarche* by Chiang which had led to the famous 'Yoshida letter' in the mid-sixties (the *Guardian*, 6 March 1971). Harrison also notes that 'Tokyo is moving rapidly to line up Mongolian copper, North Korean iron ore, and North Vietnamese anthracite as part of new trade patterns'.

Nearly a decade ago Mao Tse-tung is reported to have told a delegation of visiting Japanese Socialists that Japan then belonged to one of the world's two intermediate zones. But Japanese monopoly capital, he noted, 'is discontented with the United States, and some of its representatives are openly rising against the United States. Though Japanese monopoly capital now is dependent on the United States, the time will come when it too will shake off the American yoke.'⁴⁰ Certainly a sector of Japanese capitalism wants to shake off the American yoke. But the indications are that Japanese capitalism is still subordinate to us imperialism, and that the signs and signals of 'independence' are more shadow than substance. Moreover, it must be repeated that, while Japanese imperialism is a real danger to the peoples of Asia, including the people of Japan, us imperialism is the main enemy, and is itself largely responsible for the restoration of Japanese imperialism and Japanese militarism.

The Future of Japanese Imperialism

Among the world's imperialist powers, Japan has always been something of a maverick. Courted and feared by its capitalist competitors, admired by much of the Russian anti-Tsarist movement in the years after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, at a time when it was equally loathed by the masses of Korea and Taiwan, Japan has presented no less intractable a problem to those trying to analyse the nature of its state and its imperialist activities. Japan is largely absent from the current debate on imperialism. But it is also largely absent from the classical texts on imperialism, too. In his preface to *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin almost apologizes for using Japan as an example on the question of annexation.⁴¹

Much of the discussion on the subject of the nature of contemporary Japanese capitalism (and therefore imperialism) in Japan itself, and in Chinese political texts, hinges on the question of the relationship between Japanese capitalism and us capitalism. Emphasis on Japanese *militarism* is designed to indicate that Japanese capitalism is essentially subordinate to the United States. Chinese statements in particular have tended to concentrate on Japanese militarism, rather than on Japanese imperialism. Our understanding of postwar Japanese imperialism is that it differs structurally from prewar imperialism, and that in the postwar period, particularly in recent years, it has been big business which has been the main proponent of greatly expanded arms budgets. The military, of course, has its own relative autonomy, but it does not occupy the same position in the state as it did prior to 1945. Postwar Japanese militarism, which certainly exists, is only a component of

⁴⁰ As given in Frank Schurmann and Orville Schell, eds., *Communist China (China Readings 3)*, New York, 1967 (Penguin 1968), p. 369; this is an abridged translation from the conservative Japanese journal *Seisaku Shimbun*, 11 August 1964. To our knowledge this very interesting statement by Mao on Japan has neither been acknowledged nor denied officially.

⁴¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Preface, 26 April 1917, p. 6 (Moscow paperback ed.).

Japanese imperialism, which ultimately must be explained structurally by reference to the economic base.⁴²

One of the most important features of postwar Japan has been the unusual speed with which the economy, and Japan's position in Asia, have changed. After the initial postwar lull, Japan first structured its relationships with South-East Asia largely through trade; in the present phase investment is becoming increasingly important; and it may well be that military presence will become an integral feature of the next phase. While stressing that the military establishment has maintained its own identity (e.g. in the struggle over the 1972 Defence Budget), it must be reiterated that it is structurally only a component of Japanese imperialism.

The basis of Japan's very fast economic growth in the post-war period, the highest in the capitalist world, has been its high rate of capital accumulation and investment. The share of GNP devoted to capital investment was about 31 per cent in 1965, 35 per cent in 1970 and is scheduled to hit 39 per cent in 1975. An extraordinarily high proportion of investment went into heavy industry, thus laying the foundations for sustained future expansion. Until very recently, too, Japan exported only tiny amounts of its capital compared with other industrialized countries. At the same time it restricted foreign capital penetration to an extent which no other advanced capitalist state has done.

Paradoxically, however, it may well be Japan's rapid expansion which will weaken its autarchy. The continued growth of Japan's exports demands an ever-wider search for the raw materials to fuel Japanese industry. In this phase of the process, Japan is still in a position of weakness *vis-à-vis* the big us, Canadian and European companies. Japanese mining and other interests are being forced into an ever-expanding network of long-term joint ventures and investment deals with more powerful partners: these are overwhelmingly directed at the Japanese market, and this 'external' collaboration must soon wreak its effect internally as well.

In addition, the contradictions between the demands of Japanese capitalism and the interests of the peoples of South-East Asia will become more and more acute. The effects of Japan's trading with South-East Asia in the post-war period are obvious: areas like South Korea and Taiwan have been forced into positions of impossible subordination, and lasting imbalance. The new phase of heavy Japanese investment in the area cannot be anything but equally deleterious to the masses of the countries concerned. Even under the ferocious dictatorship of General Park in South Korea the Korean masses rose in protest against the 1965 'normalization' deal with Japan. In Japan, too, this arrangement was seen as a watershed in the re-establishment of a colonial penumbra, along pre-1945 lines, with suitable modification.

⁴² On this, see the valuable and stimulating text by Herbert P. Bix, 'Report on Japan: 1972,' *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, vol. 4, nos. 2 and 3 (spring and summer 1972), especially part 2 ('The Economic Dimension'). Bix's conclusions differ somewhat from ours.

This significant step in Japan's postwar political expansion in Asia was combated by the masses of both Korea and Japan, fighting together against their common enemy: Japanese imperialism. Many Japanese workers and peasants continue to fight against the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's alliance with us imperialism. These struggles have centred on the issue of Okinawa, the focal point not just of us-Japanese contradiction, but also of us-Japanese collaboration. Numerous aspects of the Tokyo government's servile relationship with Washington have roused large-scale popular protest: from the manufacture and transport of napalm, to the seizure of farmers' land at Santizuka. After the January 1972 meeting at San Clemente Premier Sato was asked if he would invite Nixon back to Japan for a return meeting. 'Out of the question,' Sato replied. And there is no doubt that the active hostility of the Japanese masses to such a visit makes it impossible. Huge numbers of Japanese repeatedly demonstrated their desire to abolish all manifestations of imperialism: by opposing the 1965 deal with the Seoul regime, by opposing the Japanese government's collusion with the American wars in Korea and Indochina; and by opposing the underhand arrangement to return Okinawa to Japan as a joint us-Japanese military colony. Despite the enormous economic and military ties between the two countries since the war, popular feeling in Japan has prevented any American President from setting foot in their country. It is this militancy, along with that of the other peoples of Asia, which already constrains the re-development of Japanese imperialism and which will in the end overthrow it.

THE ISAAC DEUTSCHER MEMORIAL PRIZE ANNOUNCEMENT

The undersigned members of the jury of The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize wish to announce that the Prize for 1972 to the value of £100 has been awarded to Paul Walton and Andrew Gamble for their book *From Alienation to Surplus Value*, published by Sheed and Ward, London, 1972.

Paul Walton, who is 27, is Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Bradford; Andrew Gamble, aged 24, is Tutor in Economics in Cambridge University.

The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for 1973 will be awarded in the Autumn of 1973, and a Jury drawn from among the Sponsors will be glad to consider works published or in typescript. Any such works should be submitted by 1 May 1973 to The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyds Bank, 68 Warwick Square, London SW1.

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THE FELLOW-TRAVELLERS

In this major study of the fellow-travellers in Europe and America since 1917, David Caute traces their hesitant reactions to the Bolshevik Revolution, the rapid growth of support for the USSR at the time of the Five-Year Plans and the Popular Fronts, the dilemmas confronted after the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and the strains imposed during the Cold War years by events in Czechoslovakia, Korea and Hungary. While not evading moral judgments he is primarily concerned to unravel the motivations of intelligent men whose allegiance may in retrospect seem to have been misplaced. Above all, he forces us to think again about the great Soviet experiment and the criteria by which it can be judged.

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Introduction

Korea is to-day a country of 50 million people, strategically located, and a focus of interest for all the major powers. Up to 1945 the country was a plundered colony of imperial Japan, and the Japanese have rebuilt a powerful position in the southern part of Korea. 40,000 US troops under a UN guise are still in South Korea, flanked by contingents from Britain, Turkey and Thailand, also under the UN flag.

In South Korea the Pak Jung-hi regime has for years tried to pretend to the outside world that domestic opposition is of little account. Although it is armed with a panoply of repressive laws and is backed by the fourth largest military establishment in the world (634,000 out of a population of 32 millions), the regime has always claimed that these are needed to face an external danger, the invasion from North Korea, and not any threat from within.

This has become harder to maintain since Pak began negotiations with the DPRK in August 1971. Then, in December, Pak declared a state of emergency. The grounds he gave were that an invasion from North Korea was imminent. But the negotiations went on, and barely six months later, on 4 July 1972, a joint North-South communique was issued signed on the southern side by Lee Hu-rak, the head of virulently anti-communist South Korean CIA.

Whatever the long-term thinking behind Pak's talks with the DPRK, the domestic measures he has taken confirm that his major concern is to crush the domestic opposition. Immediately after the 4 July 1972 communique, Pak ordered the execution of two of the state's most prominent political prisoners: these were a former opposition MP, and a graduate in engineering from Cambridge, England, Pak No-su, both of whom had been condemned for advocating rapprochement between North and South, a crime punishable by death under the South's anti-communist laws. Since then two more executions have been carried out for the same offence. Arrests, torture and murder, far from decreasing with negotiations have been intensified.

The CIA operated by Lee Hu-rak pervades the whole of the South. It also maintains constant surveillance of all Koreans abroad, through south Korean embassies and through Korean karate schools which act as front organisations. All opposition must work underground, and the state of emergency and martial law have driven it into further clandestinity. That is why the document published below, although it only runs to December 1971, is extremely revealing, despite its limitations. Any scientific appraisal of the political situation in Korea would, of course, have to include serious analysis of the DPRK in the North. But the text shows that socialists should extend unconditional solidarity with the workers' and students' opposition in South Korea, while exercising a critical and vigilant attention to the negotiations now proceeding between the DPRK and ROK.

document

Opposition in South Korea

South Korea is a country where the words 'Yankee, Go Home' can be punished by one year's imprisonment under the Anti-communist Law, and where a judge can tell an opposition presidential candidate that 'the freedom of speech prescribed in the Constitution does not mean unlimited freedom'.¹ The government's purpose has been summed up by its leader Pak Jung-hi in his book, *Our Nation's Path*: "The democracy we aim to build should be one that meets social and political reality and not the unworkable West European Democracy. Our type of democracy can be termed "Administrative Democracy".' In such a country opposition groups have to fight for their very existence. The stakes are high, and the government's inability to distinguish between different types of opposition groups produces strange alliances; radicals and liberals, and even progressive conservatives, find themselves aligned together against the regime. Official and unofficial groups are often mixed; elderly conservatives who remember the Japanese occupation find themselves in sympathy with radical students fighting Japanese economic investment. This means that divisions become blurred, aims and purposes diffused. But one theme overrides all others among the Korean opposition:

Fiercely blowing; our friend the wind is blowing,
Kindly blowing from Hynhaetan.²
Nippon's Embassy is ablaze.³
How well it burns, how welcome are the crackling flames
To patriots' ears!
Fire broke out but no-one fetches water.
Aimlessly, helplessly the Japanese dart around
Filming the blaze with their cameras'.

¹ Seoul judge No Sung-du when sentencing presidential candidate Kim Chul 9 December 1971.

² Hynhaetan is the Korean name for the straits separating Japan and Korea. The Korean name should not be translated as 'Sea of Japan'.

³ In Korean the word for Japan is 'Taokbari', the Korean pronunciation of the Japanese *gatta*, meaning Japanese clogs, used as a term of ridicule for the Japanese during the occupation.

This popular student song, banned by Pak's government, illustrates the overriding importance of Japan for the opposition. It is not the only problem which taxes them; but, despite the huge American military complexes in Korea and the obvious influence of the United States in every sphere of life, there are many among South Korea's opposition who would prefer American domination to that of Japan, as the lesser of the two evils. The fears of re-emergent Japanese militarism and economic neo-imperialism are amply illustrated in a 'White Paper on Korean-Japanese Relations' which has been secretly circulating among opposition groups.

Next to relations with the us and Japan, and the need for obvious reforms in domestic government, the main focus of opposition demands is 'reunification':

'The North is my home country
The North is the land where women were sold away
When the wind freezes and unfolds
On the far, far-away mountain range
My mind roams under the sorrowful Northern sky.'

These are the words of Lee Yong-hak, a southern poet who was active in the opposition in the 1930s and who returned to the North after the division of the peninsula in 1945. Despite government efforts to the contrary, Lee Yong-hak is one of the most widely read poets among South Korea's young generation, and his vision of the North is vividly matched in the work of Kim Chi-hah, the most outstanding literary rebel in South Korea to-day. Kim Chi-hah is only 27 but is a chronic sufferer from TB; yet he has inspired all opponents of the South Korean regime. He has been imprisoned under the Anti-communist Law for his most famous work, 'The Five Bandits', and his lively verse and his keen concern for the future of Korea have made him a household name among students and opposition alike. To match Lee Yong-hak's 'North', Kim Chi-hah has written 'The South':

'The throat rebels, cut down,
And shouts again,
The arms mutilated, crying out,
Again rebelling
The corn-field at last stopped
Writhing in chains, chains.
Under the blue sky where it stopped, stopped,
Yes, stopped
The bluntly burnt devil-posts are crying.
The hot South is the land of rebellion.'

No Foreign Books

The theoretical and intellectual universe of the Korean opposition is an intensely local one. Partly because many of its major tasks concern national unity and national questions but also because ideas from abroad are extremely hard to acquire. Koreans do not have the benefit of books: all socialist writing and tracts are banned. They must rely on

their own resources; some of the most active labour leaders have never heard of Marx, let alone considered his ideas—and, even if they had, the effect of government propaganda would be that Marx would be associated with the 1950–53 war. In schools, communism and socialism, and even liberalism, are all confused and lumped together. There are only a few translations of *Capital* in Korean still in existence; they were printed illegally by the South Korean communists during the Japanese occupation. In certain student bookshops it is possible to find Korean translations of Ho Chi Minh: his combination of Vietnamese nationalism within a socialist framework has a tremendous impact on Korean students.⁴ Apart from this there are few socialist authors available in Korean, other than very occasional underground circulation of selected parts of Guevara. For those who can read English it is somewhat easier to get books from sympathetic foreign friends. But in general Korean militants are thrown back on their own abilities; while oppressive measures by the authorities leave little time for careful preparatory thought, only for hasty action.⁵

The opposition has always had to contend with savage government attacks, but the level of repression was taken to new heights in December 1971, when Pak declared a 'National State of Emergency'. The official reason given at the time was the North Korean military 'threat'. The real purpose was to create a climate of uncertainty in which the government might assume the necessary emergency powers to eradicate a growing and increasingly effective domestic opposition, including the official opposition New Democratic Party, and an increasingly articulate group of Seoul's middle class consisting chiefly of academics, lawyers and journalists. Here we will concentrate on two leading sections of the movement, the students and the labour movement, and on the recent changes within each.

The Student Movement

Students have traditionally been a source of opposition in modern Korea.⁶ The most successful student struggle was that which led to the overthrow of President Rhee Syng-man's government in 1960. Something of the euphoria among students at the time can be judged from

⁴ Some Korean students opt to do military service before entering university. A limited number choose to serve in South Vietnam, some for financial, others for very different reasons. 'I wanted to go to South Vietnam. I wanted to find out about the Buddhists—they are nationalists and fighters. Why aren't our Buddhists like that? In fact I found much more important things—I read books about Ho Chi Minh'.

⁵ By contrast, South Korea was the first country in Asia to produce a significant number of communists and was represented in the Comintern from the beginning. See Suh Dae-sook *Documents on Korean Communism 1918–1948* (Princeton, 1970).

⁶ This tradition of opposition had developed long before the postwar period. Kim Chong-uk in 'Some notes on the Songgyun'gwan' (*Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch* Vol. xxxviii 1961) traces the opposition of the scholars in Korea's famed Confucian University (Songgyun'gwan) to the Imperial administration at the Yi Court (1392–1910). The demonstrations held by these scholars frequently led to clashes with the police and military. Nevertheless, the fact that the students could demonstrate testifies to their elite position in Yi Dynasty Society. Any sign of opposition within any other groups or classes in society was ruthlessly suppressed.

the following account of the 1960 demonstrations by one of the then student leaders:

'The struggle really started in 1957 when a New Democratic Party leader, John M. Chang was elected to the Vice-Presidency. But things rapidly took a turn for the worse; relations between the President and Vice-President became virtually non-existent. Then Chang was shot while attending the National Theatre. He was only wounded in the hand but it was assumed publicly that it must have been an assassination attempt. It was also widely believed by intellectuals that the government was purposely keeping the peasants and farmers poor in order that select individuals could then be bought at a cheap price to canvass votes for the government.

'A week before Revolution Day in April 1960 a large crowd of students met in a rally at Masan. The police cracked down on the demonstrators. Later that evening, a student, Kim Chu-yol, was found dead on the beach, wrapped in a piece of old sacking and with his right eye blown to bits by a tear-gas bomb. As his corpse was being carried from the beach to his home, the people of the City gathered along with the students, and street demonstrations condemning the government followed. The news spread like wild-fire throughout the country.

'On 18 April a large number of students from Korea University (in Seoul) ran through a police barricade that had been formed around the campus gates and staged a mass rally in the streets of Seoul. There were almost 5,000 students on the streets. The police, alarmed at the unprecedented size of the demonstration, attacked, using tear gas.

'On 19 April there were student demonstrations throughout the country often supported by the population. It was not until this day that the slogan which was to become familiar in the months to come was first openly shouted, "Out with Rhee Syng-man!" In Seoul itself, the demonstrations started on the campuses and then, around noon, the students began to break through the police cordons that had been formed around the University gates. Thousands of police had been mobilized, some even from the army, all under the direct command of the Head of the Presidential Bodyguard. Students from the various Universities and Colleges eventually made contact with each other and agreed to gather in front of the National Assembly Building. After a lengthy rally, the students decided to march to the Presidential mansion, then called Kyongmoddai. As they approached the gate of the Presidential Office, thousands of police encircled it and blocked the march. But it seemed that the situation was out of hand and the police began to shoot into the students. About 10 were killed and several hundreds were injured. The confrontation between police and students continued all day long. One group of students broke off and ran to the home of the Speaker of the National Assembly, Lee Kee-pong (Rhee Syng-man's right-hand man) and set fire to his residence. Another group set out for the nearby 'Namsan Mountain'. The huge Presidential statue at the top was dragged down the hill and drawn through the streets. It was dumped at the main cross-roads of Kwang Wha Mun. Further confrontations with the police developed—another 10 students were killed and, as night

came and the demonstrators began to disperse to their homes, 30 more were shot down by police who followed in pursuit.

"The confrontations continued for some three days until the professors and faculty-members finally rose to join the students. The situation was so badly out of control that the Government called the 15th Korean Army Division into the City to restore order: the plan misfired badly—many of the soldiers actually joined the students. On 21 April all the professors of the Seoul Universities called upon Rhee Syng-man to resign. The American ambassador McCarnaghy went to speak to the President and requested him to resign so that the situation might be brought "under control". He resigned on 26 April."

The account has been quoted at length as it highlights some of the crucial weaknesses of the early student movement. Students tended to consider that they were a special 'élite' group: there were no planned attempts to co-ordinate with other opposition groups. The fact that citizens joined the demonstration is regarded rather as a fortuitous happening. Secondly, there was little overall co-ordination between the various Seoul Universities. (Indeed, inter-campus rivalries often seriously hampered the struggle). Moreover, after the overthrow of Rhee Syng-man, many students became disillusioned with John M. Chang's new liberal government, with its attempts to restore order and its failure to bring in reforms. Some of the students who had led the 1960 Revolution later supported the 1961 military coup by Pak Jung-hi (though the alliance was, of course, short-lived). A lack of coherent thought and agreement on aims and principles was conspicuously lacking among the student militants of the 1960 rising.

Since 1960 there has been a tendency for student leaders to look to the past rather than the future, and to dream of the glories of the 1960 revolution. In 1965, an alliance of students and anti-Japanese members of the population came near to toppling the government in protests at the restoration of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan. But it was only in the movement of 1970–71 that the students overcame the weaknesses of the early, unco-ordinated struggle of 1960.⁷

The first significant change occurred towards the end of 1970 with the publication by a group of Seoul National University Law students of an underground newspaper, *The Bell of Freedom* (*Chayoni Jong*), which was distributed throughout the Seoul University campuses. The publica-

⁷ The 1965 demonstrations against the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and Korea were an important basis for the 1971 struggles. Although the Japanese press barely acknowledged the Korean students' fight against Japan's emergent militarism and neo-economic imperialism, the 1965 struggle in Seoul came very near to toppling the Pak Jung-hi government (much more so than the 1971 demonstrations). The disillusionment of the Korean students with the Japanese left movements in 1965 was exceptionally bitter and has served to estrange them further still from the Japanese. The 1965 movement nearly succeeded in its professed aim of toppling the government chiefly due to an odd alliance that was formed between the students and the mass of elderly Korean citizenry whose bitter memories of the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula led them to oppose the government's normalization plans. For further details, see Kim Kwang-bong, *Korea and Japan* (Praeger Political Studies, 1971).

tion served to co-ordinate student efforts, promote discussion and study groups on aspects of the student struggle and, most importantly, to break down the traditional cross-campus rivalries. The newspaper thus marked a step forward in ideology, commitment and co-ordination, without which the 1971 struggles would not have been so effective. The chief discussion topics covered by the newspaper were the nature of Japanese investment in Korea, campus struggles and treatment of students imprisoned by the CIA or police. The paper continued publication for only one year. It was suppressed by the government when the army occupied the University campuses in October 1971, and its editor, Lee Shin-bom has been arrested for 'plotting to overthrow the legally-constituted government of the Republic'. The same period saw considerable involvement of the students in labour disputes, a factor which could be of immeasurable importance to the future level of both student and working class consciousness.

Activities in 1971 centred around the Presidential and National Assembly elections (held in April and May respectively). The demonstrations prior to the elections were considerably less haphazard than in previous struggles. This was largely due to the formation of a cross-campus 'National Student League' (sometimes referred to in Korean as 'Zengakuren' after the Japanese name); it was under the Presidency of Shim Chae-kwan (formerly of the economics college of Seoul National University). Shim has also been arrested and faces the same charges as Lee Shin-bom. The co-ordination achieved by the *Ball of Freedom* and the National Student League marked a significant development for the students.

The protests initially focussed on the government's proposal to extend campus military training. The reasons underlying the students' opposition to this proposal was privately explained to the writer by one activist who was later arrested with Lee and Shim: 'Campus military drill, besides obviously lowering the academic standards of the University, lessens the ability to think and criticize . . . From the political point of view, it is quite clear that any increase in campus drill or the Homeland Reserve Forces would be met by parallel increases in the North. Not only would opinion be sceptical about the South's sincerity for reunification as a result of such increases in our military programme, but the move would in fact delay the desired reunification of our country: we do not want reunification by war, but by peace and negotiation. Moreover, the "special merit" given to students engaging in military drill (with the consequent later privileges in service) merely serves to widen the gap between a student "elite" and the broad masses of the people. In short, the proposals are so clearly unnecessary that the real motives of the government are transparent—namely, to oppress student campus activities; and to create a sense of imminent danger and crisis in the country at large so that the people, through fear, will accept a strong generalissimo-type government. The measures are not for "national safety", but only for the regime's continued security'.

There were some arrests and sporadic confrontations between students and police throughout March and April 1971 and many students were suspended from colleges for evading the campus drill regulations.

However, the movement still seemed well under the authorities' control.⁸ It was not until after the May elections that cumulative dissatisfaction over election procedures and results, the draft laws and sympathy for the students arrested or expelled, exploded into the most serious demonstrations since 1965.⁹ The demonstrations were sparked off by a seemingly trivial incident (which emphasized how volatile the universities had become since the early part of the year). This was the intrusion of 30 armed soldiers of the Capital Garrison Command into the Korea University campus on the night of 6 October, 1971. (The soldiers later alleged that they had been incited by the students talking about their commander 'in a disrespectful manner'.) Twenty students were hauled away, beaten and then dumped in the home garden of Korea University's President. Thereafter, students took to the streets throughout Seoul. The movement rapidly escalated and the Government summoned troops into the city under the 'Garrison Decree' to restore order. The following headlines and sentences are all taken from the government newspaper, *Korea Herald*, and the *Korea Times*. They vividly illustrate the extent of the struggles.

- 11 October 3,000 students demonstrate in Seoul.
- 12 October 4,500 students of Yonsei and Korea Universities demonstrate. <
- 13 October All student publications banned.
- 15 October Education Ministry closes 10 major Seoul Universities.
Troops occupy campuses under Garrison Decree.¹⁰
- 16 October Opposition New Democratic Party Head, Kim Hong-il demands withdrawal of Garrison Decree.
Home Ministry announces 1,616 students arrested.

⁸ Only ten days before the all-important Presidential election militants were held back by fear caused by the Government's announcement of the arrests of two students, formerly resident in Japan, Soh Sung and Soh Jun-shik under the Anti-communist Law. They were charged with visiting North Korea. Concerned Japanese scholars and friends, led by assistant Professor Teraoka of Tokyo Kyoikku Daigaku, have been mounting campaigns on the brothers' behalf, challenging the evidence proffered in Court. The physical condition of the elder Soh Sung has been the cause of considerable concern. From the Korean students' point of view, the arrests threw the movement into utter confusion only a matter of days before the elections. The entire question of 'control by fear' through the application of the Anti-communist Law and National Security Law to domestic movements (especially applied to students who have spent considerable time abroad) is too large to be fully treated in this article. It includes the 1967 kidnapping by the Korean CIA of students resident in West Germany and France, the 1969-70 Park No-su case involving Cambridge University, UK, and the 1971 case of the Soh brothers from Japan. (Further arrests of students whose families reside in Japan were announced in late November 1971 but full details are not yet known).

⁹ The 1971 election was marked by widespread abuses. Suffice it to say that the official opposition party (New Democratic Party) claimed that the Presidential election was a 'silent assassination' and alleged publicly that more than 3 million votes had been rigged.

¹⁰ The following is an excerpt from the *Korea Times* of 16 October 1971: 'The troops moved out of their camps in various parts of Seoul City at 10.35 a.m. and headed for Seoul National, Korea, Yonsei and Sunggyungwan Universities. Paratroopers of the army 1st Airborne Special Force Group were also mobilized. Led by machinegun-mounted armoured vehicles, the troops stormed into the campuses aboard trucks. Riot policemen who accompanied the Army troops arrested students who were holding rallies or hunger sit-ins on the campuses, while the troops fired tear-gas bombs'.

- 19 October Conscription Office announces 9,307 students to be conscripted.
- 21 October New laws drawn up for 51 Universities giving added powers to Ministry of Education.
Ehwa Women's University, Konkuk, Kungmin and Chungang Universities closed. (Total closed now 14.)
- 22 October Entire faculty of Hankuk College resign as protest.
- 23 October Troops withdrawn from campuses.

The troops succeeded in their objectives as they were bound to do; despite protests from National Assemblymen and sympathetic professors or faculty-members, the student struggle was effectively crushed. Nevertheless, by resorting to sending troops into the campuses, the government had alienated large sections of public opinion, as shown by the unusually full coverage given to the events by the normally subservient press; moreover, any possibilities for co-operation in the National Assembly between Government Party and Opposition had been ruled out.

Following the October demonstrations, the government arrested several leaders under the National Security Law for 'plotting to overthrow the legally-constituted government of the Republic'. (Defending lawyers of two of the students concerned filed a suit with the prosecutor's office, alleging that the confessions signed by the students were extracted under torture.) Also arrested was Professor Yu Ki-chong, former President of Seoul National University, for 'inciting the students through his lectures'. It is no coincidence that those students most active in workers' struggles, and in the production of the *Bell of Freedom* newspaper and co-ordination of cross-campus activities were all arrested and received the most serious charges—a remarkable demonstration as to how alarmed the government had become at the student's new policies.

The Labour Movement

The end of 1970 also marked a turning point in labour disputes. Several new features manifested themselves which could have important repercussions in the future. Surprisingly Korea has on its Statute Books some of the most advanced and humane labour legislation in the world: practice, however, differs sharply from theory.¹¹ Although labourers' rights are theoretically protected, the only official organizations through which grievances might be righted are the Government-run Labour Office (which supposedly enforces minimum standards in working-places) and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) which, if

¹¹ The discrepancy between ideals expressed in law and the miserable realities experienced in life itself is not unique but the contrast is extremely great in Korea. Dr. Hahn Pyong-choon's *The Korean Political Tradition and Law* (Hollym Corporation, Seoul, 1971) tries to trace the origin of this phenomenon in terms of Korea's historical and cultural development. Hahn believes that the Korean Constitution and related basic laws are not to be considered as 'laws' in the Western sense at all, but as 'ideals to which the rulers and people must aspire'. Hahn is now serving as special advisor to President Park Jung-hi.

not actually government-run, is financed largely by the regime and is heavily controlled by them.¹²

The events of 1970-71 demonstrated a growing discontent with the official channels of protest and opposition began to appear sporadically outside the Establishment structure, often with tragic results due to the authorities' prompt and violent reactions.

The Suicide of Chun Tae-il

The first of these incidents (and one which probably acted as an indirect inspiration for the subsequent struggles) was the suicide, in November 1970, of a young labourer of 23. 'We are not machines! Employers, keep the Labour Standard Laws!' read the placards carried by the Association of Cloth-Makers in a demonstration soliciting support to improve conditions at Seoul's Pyongwha Market in November 1970. Pyongwha Market consists of garment-makers' workshops, the average floor-space of the small ones being about one and a half square metres with a ceiling height of only one and a third metres. The employees, who receive less than 12 dollars a week, frequently suffer from eye-infections, indigestion and pneumonia, attributable to the bad ventilation and dust-ridden atmosphere. The FKIU and the Labour Office refused to take action. In order to improve these conditions, the Association of Cloth-Makers was formed in 1970 by a far-sighted young cutter of only 23, Chun Tae-il. The demonstration was dispersed by the police. In utter desperation, on 12 November 1970, by the main road at the entrance to Pyongwha Market, Chun Tae-il poured two cans of kerosene oil over his body and set himself alight. Ten hours later, he was dead. 'Don't waste my death—many people are overworked in the market-place' claimed the dying boy. 'Don't remove my body from the hospital until the officials promise to improve working conditions.'

Students at Seoul National University responded immediately and enthusiastically. Co-operating closely with the dead boy's family and the new Association of Cloth-Makers, they helped print and circulate throughout Seoul the notebook written by Chun before his death—writing which contained a vivid description of the poverty and squalor of

¹² One of FKIU's member organizations, the Foreign Organizations' Employees' Union, has been accused by foreign governments of being totally regime-organized and of being used as a means of creating difficulties for efficiently-run foreign companies, against which competing native companies could never otherwise hope to survive. It was, for example, claimed that the 1970 labour troubles in Seoul's Chosun Hotel (50% American-owned and managed) were inspired by the government Korea Tourist Bureau (KTB), working through the employees of a rival KTB Hotel, the Bando. English employees of the British Chartered Bank in Seoul claimed in private conversations with the author that the 1971 pay dispute and strikes (the worst in the bank's history) had been directly occasioned by Government interference. The Chartered Bank's Annual Report for 1971 contains a muted echo of this: '... many inside and outside Korea view the future with some apprehension particularly in view of the nationalistic attitude being exhibited towards existing and future investment from overseas' (p. 48). Although there is little sympathy for the economic exploitation of developing nations by foreign companies, the point here is that the Government control of the Foreign Organizations' Employees' Union serves as an indicator of the Establishment's interest in and power over the official Union movement as a whole.

ordinary Koreans' life in the hopeless Pyongwha Market: 'My mind has been floating amid these stark realities. The factory I was working for had some 30 employees, making children's jumpers. Now they are making autumn jumpers, but soon they will start making winter ones, sewing fur and other linings into them. Most of the employees are girls, their ages ranging from 19 to 23 doing sewing, with those of ages 14 to 18 being their assistants. They begin to work around 8.30 in the morning and continue until 10.00 or 11.30 at night. Don't you think it's too long? Here is a problem. If we count the working hours, how many hours do they have to work daily? 14 hours a day, as you can see. How can they put up with such long stretches of work? They are weaker than men and, what's more, sewing is a fairly strenuous task. If they separate mind from body, then they cannot sew properly. Construction work requires physical strength and office work requires mental concentration, but a sewer needs both. It is so pitiful to see these cloth-makers work for 14 hours a day in so much dust, only to return to their homes at night utterly exhausted.'

'As a cutter, I spend most of the day with these people. It's really hard. Think of a girl as young as only 14 being scolded by her superiors, the cutters, because she cannot finish the vast amount of work within the required time-limit. For lunch she eats as little to sustain her as an elephant would obtain in nourishment from a single piece of biscuit. They are so young but they are relentlessly engaged in a struggle for very existence itself. As you know, their young hearts are ruthlessly crushed.'

Led by the students, Chun's death took on national significance. The mass circulation daily, *Dong-A Ilbo*, printed some excerpts from the labourer's notebook—only to receive an injunction from the government to refrain from printing further details. The opposition New Democratic Party's new leader, Kim Dae-jung, (about to challenge President Pak Jung-hi in the April 1971 elections) sent messages of sympathy to the family. Public opinion had been alerted; the government had to act. Thus, while quietly throttling the protest movement by preventing further publication and confiscating some sections of the note-book (particularly the last 10 pages which had dealt with the reasons for organizing the Association of Cloth-Makers), the Ministry of Labour dismissed some of the Labour Office's staff, promised amelioration of conditions in the Market (some of which were actually carried out) and sent representatives to the funeral.

But the students, for the first time, had already become directly involved in a labour dispute. 'It has been proved past all doubt', claimed one student leader 'that the government's claims about modernization and improvement of living standards are false'. A foreign lecturer at Yonsei University, Dr. G. Breidenstein, was threatened with deportation for holding a public lecture about the incident. Another prominent student figure vowed that he would enter the labour movement after graduating from college; a hitherto unthinkable course for a 'privileged' student. Impressive evidence of the campus involvement in the case was furnished when the government summarily closed two of Seoul's universities.

Hanjin Transportation Company: the Link with Vietnam

Two further labour protests in 1971 were of considerable interest in exposing different problems; the first revealed the collusion of the ROK government with the American military in South Vietnam. The origins of the struggle extended back some 5 years when 700 persons were employed by Hanjin to work in South Vietnam under a contract into which the company had entered with the American forces. Hanjin attracted the 700 employees by offering a basic rate of US \$390 per month plus additional overtime allowances. However, once in South Vietnam, the employees discovered that no overtime was being paid and that anyone who complained about this was forthwith dismissed from work without any adequate explanation. Once back in Korea, the workers determined to fight for their dues. For a year they unsuccessfully attempted to place an advertisement in the local newspapers explaining their predicament (the press management consistently refused to print such a politically-orientated advertisement), until, in January 1971, the *Chosun Ilbo* weekly magazine agreed (for a price) to run the advertisement five times.

The labourers claimed that back allowances for overtime averaged US \$1,000 per person and that, in total, the amount due came to around US \$4 millions. As the company still took a negative attitude to the claims, 700 workers attacked the head office of Hanjin in Seoul's new KAL Building on 12 September 1971. Police immediately intervened, some 57 demonstrators being hauled away for 'interrogation'. 17 were later charged with 'social unrest' and their cases are still pending before the courts.

However, the attack on the office had aroused public opinion and concern. The opposition New Democratic Party demanded in the National Assembly that the President of Hanjin make public the details of the contract. The company refused, on the surprising grounds that the contract was State Classified Military Information—a statement later upheld by the government. The attempt to discover precisely how a private company could sign a contract in South Vietnam that becomes State Classified Military Information in Seoul, detrimental to the 'security' of South Korea might defy any credible explanation by the authorities. Thus, in this instance, the protest of a group of workers had exposed a central political issue, calling into question the regime's total policy towards Vietnam.

Kwangju Shanty-town 'Riot'

Since the Korean War, the imbalance of wealth and prospects between the agriculture-orientated country-side and the newly industrialized cities of South Korea has attracted immigration to the urban areas at an alarming rate.¹³ The poor ex-rural labourers accommodated themselves

¹³ The statistics for the growth of Seoul are as follows:

1945	900,000
1955	1,500,000
1965	3,500,000
1970	5,000,000 +

footnote continued on next page

in the capital by building flimsy, illegal shacks from whatever materials happened to be at hand. (In 1970 it was already estimated that there were some 180,000 such 'shacks'.) As early as 1969, the government started to clear the illegal dwellings by forcing the inhabitants to move to a new 'satellite' town, Kwangju, some 2 hours' bus-ride from Seoul; they offered cheap land and a tent per family as incentives.

By 1971 there were some 160,000 persons living in Kwangju, over 100,000 of whom had been forcibly moved from Seoul. However, other than a luxurious town hall, little had been prepared for the new inhabitants: there was no water supply, no sewage system, no drainage, no electricity. Moreover, despite repeated promises of employment opportunities, by mid-1971, there were sufficient jobs for only 1,200 people (on merely a part-time basis) out of a total population of 160,000! In early 1971, a Korean journalist visiting the town, vividly recalled his impressions of the misery and squalor. 'As I left that wasteland of human civilization, a huge flag-pole in the garden of the Town Hall loomed above me through the evening twilight like a cross at the gates of a neglected cemetery'. According to the *Korea Times*, 15 children died of measles, diarrhoea or fever in the month of July alone, while some 500 more were seriously ill from the same diseases because of the insanitary living conditions in the town.

In early August, the inhabitants rioted. Two police jeeps were burned and the police station and the estate office of the town hall were completely destroyed. The 'sub-marginal people'—as the regime calls the inhabitants—were taking their revenge. The government was taken completely unawares; it capitulated immediately. Administrative reforms were forthwith instituted; the price of land was lowered; 2,500 tons of rice and other grains were rushed to the impoverished citizens; taxation largely abolished and employment-guidance centres set up. The rioters seemed to have achieved all their aims.

The question must be raised as to why the government responded so readily and promptly. The first factor was the sheer size of the uprising (at least 20,000 persons were involved). In light of this, Government attempts to dismiss the protest as led by a few extremist agitators (21 were arrested and charged with 'ring-leading' the uprising) seemed rather hollow. Indeed, probably the most alarming feature (from the government's point of view) was the very spontaneity of the uprising. In a land where Kwangju is by no means the only impoverished town or village, there was probably a very real fear that the Kwangju protest might spread throughout the length and breadth of the Republic. At the time, such a possibility did not seem remote.¹⁴

On their own these opposition forces, and the others that have not

The city's population has doubled since 1960. With an annual growth-rate of 8 per cent, Seoul is one of the world's fastest-growing cities. Every day, its total population increases by about 1,000 persons—from *Christians and Social Justice in Korea* by G. Breidenstein, Seoul, 1971.

¹⁴ Fuller details can be found in the *Korea Times* and *Korea Herald* of 12 August 1971. The Government estimated the number of rioters as 20,000 but other observers placed the number at nearly 50,000.

been discussed here, presented a powerful threat to Pak which he had to counter. When talks with the North, began in mid-1971, Kim Chul, the leader of the South Korean United Socialist Party, who had run against Pak in the April 1971 elections, was arrested by the CIA for crimes under the Anti-communist Law. He was accused of irresponsibly encouraging the communists and endangering National Security; as a result he received one year in prison, two year's probation and one further year's suspension of civil rights.

But this kind of action was not enough. In the middle of the night of December 26/27, when the opposition party were unable to attend because of the Seoul curfew which starts at midnight, the government rammed legislation through the Assembly to give it extra powers to handle 'The National State of Emergency'. The President was empowered to control prices, wages, rents, and labour disturbances; to alter budgetary appropriations;¹⁵ to mobilise people and resources throughout the country at random; to control public assemblies and demonstrations; and to inspect and control the press. Henceforward none of these measures would require National Assembly approval. It took only a one-minute committee session and a two-minute plenary session to pass the legislation. The powers thus granted are those normally invoked by a head of state whose country is engaged in full-scale war against an external enemy. In this case the government was sitting at a conference table with this enemy negotiating about reuniting divided families. The full-scale war was being waged against the enemy at home.

David Valance

¹⁵ The critical state of the economy was another target of the government's measures. The Korean ~~won~~ had been depreciating against the dollar at the rate of 15 per cent per annum, and prices were rising by the same percentage. Imports for 1971 were US \$2,394m. compared to exports of only US \$1,067m. The decline in the demand generated by the Vietnam war was also starting to cut into non-invisible earnings, and the devaluation of the dollar and revaluation of the yen hit South Korea's trade with both its major partners.

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JONATHAN CAPE

review

A Spanish Masterpiece

Son of a poor Madrid washerwoman whose husband had died, Arturo Barea was born in 1897 in Madrid. He was brought up by a relatively well-to-do uncle and a bigoted catholic aunt. A scholarship took him to a catholic school for the rich in Madrid, while both sides of his family had peasant relatives living in Castile whom he visited on his holidays. One group lived in the poor village of Brunete, later to become famous as a battlefield in the civil war; the other in a more prosperous wine-growing village where his grandmother, an outspoken atheist, was the dominant member. In Madrid, the boy was the washerwoman's son living on the charity of relatives; in the villages he was the sailor-suited, rich little Madrileño. Split between irreconcilable alternatives, his life was that of a 'bastard' in the Sartrean sense. The courage of the boy was not to give in to the easier of the options, never to yield to the temptation to deny his roots in the working class; but at the same time always to be able to view the class from which he sprang with a certain objectivity. It was this strength that allowed him to write one of the few masterpieces of contemporary Spain.

The Forging of a Rebel, published in English in the 1940s and now republished in one volume, is a trilogy of selective autobiographical novels.¹ Barea set down his objectives and adhered to them rigorously. 'In taking and exploring my past self as a member of the Spanish generation which was the core of the Civil War, I hoped to expose some of the roots of that war. I wanted to describe the shocks which had scarred my mind, because I am convinced that these shocks, in different individual forms but from the same collective causes, scarred and shaped the minds of other Spaniards too.'

The first of the novels, *The Forge*, describes his childhood, the second, *The Track*, his experiences as a sergeant in the Spanish army waging colonial war in Morocco in the 1920s. Both are works of great literary merit and acute observation of pre Civil War Spain. Poverty/wealth, town/country, religion/atheism are the major polarities of his youth which ends with him rebelling against a promising priest-formed school career and becoming a bank clerk. Then he rebelled again, under the extreme exploitation of Spanish capitalism, and joined the socialist-led UGT, one of the first white-collar workers to do so.

In Morocco he found that imperialism was but the other face of capitalist exploitation at home: the working class paid the bill in both cases. Though not overtly a supporter of the Moroccans, his experience of a corrupt Spanish officer class exploiting every possible means—

¹ Arturo Barea, *The Forging of a Rebel*, Davis-Poynter 1972, 751 pp, £5.

including its own soldiers—to profiteer and continue a war which benefited only the metropolitan ruling class, sharpened his perception of the realities of his own country. There, too, he saw the Foreign Legion, under its new commander Colonel Franco, at work—the force that little more than a decade later would sweep to the gates of Madrid and be repulsed by the masses in arms. When, finally, he left the army it was with a horror of violence after his column was sent to the relief of Melilla where the Spanish garrison had been wiped out by Abd-el-Krim.

The third novel, *The Clash*, describes the years up to and during the Civil War. Barca, meantime, had become a successful businessman who could afford to lead the life of a bourgeois in Madrid. Here, among his business associates, he saw the rise of fascism; but he never lost faith in the working class. In a small village where he stayed at weekends he helped organize the labourers and small peasants to win the Popular Front elections against extreme pressure from the local *caciques* and landlords. When the victory was won nothing changed, the *caciques* still prevented the landlords from employing the men. 'It appeared as though the voice of the people had not been heard.'

What was the voice of the people saying? Barca listens to communists, anarchists, socialists expounding their positions. But it is to an old and illiterate worker that he gives his sympathy. "And now I tell you—shut up about Bakunin and Marx. URR! Do you know what that stands for? Union of Brother Workers." 'This was the slogan under which communists, anarchists and socialists fought together in the Asturian uprising of 1934. As Claudin has recently written (NLR 74) 'the creation of a great revolutionary party was an exceptionally strong possibility between 1934 and 1936, but its basis in Marxism was an open, problematic question.' Barca echoes this: 'Why was it that the men in the street, the common people, the workers, the farm labourers and the miners were always ready to get together—and not their leaders?'

The finest pages of *The Clash* describe the population of Madrid rising to make the city their own, to defend themselves against the military, to make the revolution. Barca was at the *Casa del Pueblo* when the masses began roaring for arms; he was with them again—unarmed—like the majority—when they stormed the Montaña barracks where the insurgent military held out. And he was still there when, with Franco's troops at the gates, the government fled Madrid in November, 1936. Though refusing to bear arms, he participated in that second surge of popular initiative to hold the invaders from the gates. On his own he kept the Foreign Ministry open, helped form a workers committee to take it over, continued to run the press censorship and later broadcast from the besieged city as the 'Voice of Madrid'.

His faith in the efficacy of the Spanish socialist party, the largest working class party at the outbreak of war, evaporated during the struggle. He refused to join any other party. A rebel who had hoped for a 'free Spain of free people' to come about without bloodshed he found himself hating the violence of revolution; and as the revolu-

tion was gradually 'brought under control' in the name of winning the war and defending the republican parliamentary regime he found himself isolated by the nascent bureaucracy. This and the incessant shelling of Madrid nearly drove him insane. Though he railed at foreigners because they refused to see 'the war as our war, as Spain's torture and pain', he was saved from madness by the love of an Austrian woman, a socialist. . .

The polarities which previously had been so creative now began to break him. Perhaps this explains why *The Clash*, despite its moving passages, is less successful a piece of writing than the preceding novels. The rack on which he tortured himself was still too close. In Barcelona where he spent some time before leaving Spain for good in 1938 he found an efficient administration, a regular army. 'I believed the reorganization to have been necessary; and yet it had ruined the urge for freedom, the blundering efforts to build social life anew. My brain assented, and all my instincts rose against it. There was no time or place for the premature fraternity of Madrid. Here I could not talk to any man in the street as to a friend and brother.' His instincts were surely right. 'The spirit which made the defence of Madrid possible,' writes Claudin, 'was the spirit of proletarian revolution, and the only chance of victory (in the war) lay in its preservation and development.' But for Barea it was too late. Exile in France and then England followed. There he, who had never written before, wrote a great book in honour of the working class he had never wished to desert.

L.R.

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communication

Dear New Left Review,

Anyone studying the dynamics of imperialism will have to take very seriously the arguments now being put forward by Arghiri Emmanuel. The first part of his *Colonialism and Imperialism* (NLR 73) presents a very convincing case for believing that under some circumstances the imperial or metropolitan power will be relatively more progressive than the power of colonialists actually in residence in the colony.

One or two points in the second half of his article are a little more open to question; on some matters of detail it is possible to produce evidence that contradicts him. Emmanuel's article begins with a table showing British overseas investment as worth £1 billion in 1870 and worth £4 billion in 1914. This implies a rate of growth of the original investment of about 3 per cent a year. Emmanuel argues that this was distinctly too low a rate to be attractive, and he goes on to conclude that the capitalists who had made the original investment were steadily withdrawing a portion of their returns for domestic consumption or investment. The implication is that British imperial expansion did not proceed from a need to reinvest overseas the product of domestic capitalist investment.

At the simplest level, there are other estimates of the size of British overseas investment that point to a higher rate of growth. Imlah, in *Economic Elements in the 'Pax Britannica'* (p. 72-5), suggests that the 1870 value was £0.7 billion and the 1914 value was £4.0 billion, which implies a rate of growth of 4 per cent a year. Feinstein, in *National Income Expenditure and Output 1855-1965* (p. 110), suggests that the 1870 value was £0.8 billion and the 1914 value was £4.2 billion, which implies a slightly slower rate of growth, but still something clearly over 3½ per cent a year. These estimates make overseas investment look rather more profitable.

Even within Emmanuel's framework of a rate of growth of 3 per cent a year it might be possible to show that overseas investment was a self-sustaining activity. Certainly nobody would want to invest his money outside England in an investment that offered so little. But this was only a consideration in the mind of an individual investor before making his decision. He would ask for more than 3 per cent because he could get 3 per cent perfectly safely inside England. To be precise, the rate of return on Consols, taking the annual averages for the 45 years from 1870 to 1914 inclusive, was just under 3 per cent. Any investment that wanted to draw an Englishman away from the complete security of Consols would have to offer rather more, to make up for the fear of bankruptcy and repudiation. But if, *after the event*, the investor found that he had got an average 3 per cent on his investments outside Consols, he would have nothing to complain about.

All figures for overseas investment rely on bringing together a number of unknowns and making them into something that is known. The

final figure of about £4 billion for British investment in 1914 depends, in Imlah's and in Feinstein's series, upon taking the overseas interest and dividend income year by year and adding it up. This method of calculation makes little allowance for the increase of income that might be expected from retained earnings, which might be seen sooner or later in the form of capital gains. Imlah deals with this problem by the heroic assumption that capital gains are probably offset by capital losses (p. 63). This may be the case, but it seems a very happy coincidence for the statisticians. When Emmanuel allocates British investment to different sectors (p. 54), he estimates 'private investments' at £ $\frac{1}{2}$ billion. Imlah's estimate (p. 67) was that 'private investment' was about 20 per cent of the public issues, which on Emmanuel's calculation of £3 $\frac{1}{4}$ billion of 'public issues' would come to a 'private investment' of £ $\frac{3}{4}$ billion, £ $\frac{1}{2}$ billion more than Emmanuel allows.

None of these points of detail could be called conclusive, but they do suggest that the rate of growth was higher than Emmanuel gives and that the 1914 total for overseas investment was greater than Emmanuel and most other writers reckon. It is quite possible that overseas investment went ahead as a force that was mainly self-financing but sometimes drew money out from England.

All the same, it can be asked (though with some hesitation) whether it would really alter our conceptual framework for imperialism if we found that the investing countries consumed some part of the income from their overseas investments. The argument in the past has been that overseas investments are made because investors have more money at home than they can invest at current rates of return. This does not mean that they expect a rate of return of zero on overseas investment let alone need one.

It is quite true that the more the investor brings back, the greater the risk that the home market will become more saturated with capital. But if the overseas investor brings back x per cent, and reinvests $y - x$, his foreign investments will increase and the home market will be no worse off than before. So it would be quite conceivable, theoretically, that in the period Emmanuel is considering the home market was yielding 3 per cent, overseas investments were giving 6 per cent, and investors were bringing back 3 per cent and reinvesting 3 per cent overseas (to fit Emmanuel's rate of growth, though a yield of 6 per cent is high).

Even if all this had happened, it would still be true that people had invested overseas because they had money that could not find a place on the home market, and that they then consumed the proceeds just as if they had found a place for it at home. The apparent theoretical difficulty comes because Emmanuel has introduced the idea that people will not be driven by shortage of domestic opportunity to invest overseas until the domestic rate of return is zero. But in fact they will relieve the pressure on the home market if they invest abroad well before the rate of interest falls to zero, provided that they do not flood the home market by bringing back all the proceeds of their foreign investment.

Yours fraternally

Trevor Lloyd

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The March elections in Chile this year represented a defeat for reaction and were a testimony to the Chilean workers' solidarity as a class. However the economic and political difficulties of the Allende Government remain as acute as ever. The intensifying nature of the internal and external threats to the Popular Unity coalition are documented by Kyle Steenland in a study of its first two years. In autumn 1972 the Chilean bourgeoisie staged an unprecedented strike against the UP Government, temporarily forcing Allende to bring three representatives of the Army into the Cabinet. This political retreat graphically underlined the central issue for any strategy for socialism in Chile—which the UP government has so far persistently and ominously avoided: the subsistence of the whole repressive armoury of the bourgeois State machine, whose complete destruction is the indispensable precondition for the liberation of the exploited classes from the reign of capital. It is an elementary principle of Marxism that the armed apparatus of the capitalist state must be levelled, not accommodated, for any successful march towards socialism. The creation of a genuine workers' power, capable of exercising direct proletarian sovereignty, is the only way forward in Chile. The existence of the UP government today—a major and positive achievement of the Chilean masses—does not dispose of the need for soviet-type institutions: it renders them all the more urgently and unremittingly necessary if there is to be any chance of a socialist revolution in Chile.

The problems of establishing a revolutionary power in a bourgeois Republic menaced by military revolt and fascism are vividly evoked by Ronald Fraser's report of the experiences of survivors of the Spanish Civil

War. The workers concerned were moderate Socialists at the time of the war but they still acknowledge the disastrous and demobilizing constraint represented by the Republican Government. The revolutionary committees set up by the Popular Front Parties to organize the resistance of the workers and peasants to the military revolt failed to assert themselves as effective instruments of workers power. The political background to such failures were explored in NLR 74 by Fernando Claudin in a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Civil War.

Bourgeois ideologues have in recent decades strenuously sought to replace class concepts with other factitious sociological categories, while reformists have obscured principled proletarian politics with neo-populist theories of anti-monopoly alliances. Nicos Poulantzas's expository text 'On Social Classes' constitutes a sharp rejoinder. It reasserts the fundamental character of class conflicts within contemporary history and elaborates a theory of the subordinate role of other social divisions. At the same time it sketches typical class configurations of advanced capitalism and the forces that solidify its oppressive unity. Poulantzas discusses the nature and role not only of big capital and the proletariat, but also of the petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals, bureaucracy and educational system within capitalist social formations. His theses will receive a detailed presentation in his two major works, 'Political Power and Social Classes' and 'Fascism and Dictatorship', scheduled for publication this year.

The proclamation of a state of emergency in the Philippines in September 1972 signalled the sharpening of new contradictions within that country. For some time this South-east Asian state, Vietnam's eastern neighbour had appeared to be immune to the pressures of the post-colonial world. It had enjoyed a limited and anomalous degree of bourgeois freedom, and had maintained an economic performance superior to that of most other third world states. In his comprehensive survey of the formation of the modern Philippines Jonathan Fast analyses the atypical factors that operated upon the Philippines, enabling it to pursue its specific evolution. He shows how, despite the bloody installation of US rule at the start of the century and the Huk liberation movement during and after the Second World War, the Filipino bourgeoisie was able to pursue its successive collaborations with US and Japanese imperialism. At the same time he shows how the breakdown of these conditions in the late 1960s has divided the Filipino bourgeoisie and forced Marcos to suspend the existing forms of political freedom. For the Left this has meant both a sharpening of repression and a new opportunity to advance the emancipation of the Filipino masses.

Kyle Steenland

Two Years of 'Popular Unity' in Chile: A Balance Sheet

■ The Allende government, representing the *Unidad Popular* coalition in Chile, has now been in office for over two years. It is time enough to make an assessment of it. The stated goals of the UP were to end the monopoly structure of the Chilean economy, break Chilean dependence on imperialism, and begin the construction of socialism. Given the past history of reformism in Third World countries, it can be taken as read that the accomplishment of the first two goals presupposes the achievement of the third. That is to say that without building socialism it is impossible to escape from imperialist domination or from the concentration of wealth in the hands of big capital. The UP has expressly acknowledged this fact in its Programme: 'In Chile the "reformist" and "developmental" solutions that the Alliance for Progress encouraged and that the government of Frei made its own, have not succeeded in changing anything important'. The Frei government attempted to curb the power of the most wealthy and take away the land of the biggest landowners, but it tried to do so in order to modernize capitalism and make it more efficient. Therefore it failed.

The Frei government sought to regain the country's independence by 'nationalizing' copper, but it ended up simply making us control of the copper more effective and cheaper. During the second half of Frei's regime the economy was stagnant, with the GNP increasing at an average of 3 per cent a year, barely keeping up with the population; Frei's reforms had failed to make the capitalist system healthy.

The UP formally acknowledges that another attempt at reform, even if more conscientious and efficient, will only lead to more stagnation, if carried out within the context of capitalism. It therefore calls for the struggle against monopolies and against imperialism to be synchronized with the building of socialism. Unfortunately, the various parties in the UP coalition disagree on the time schedule for this programme. The Communist Party believes that socialism can be built at some indefinite future date after the anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist tasks have been carried out. This theory of stages, with the last and most important stage left to an indefinite future, forgets that revolutions which do not advance rapidly are crushed. In the words of Rosa Luxemburg: 'In this, the Russian Revolution has but confirmed the basic lesson of every great revolution, the law of its being, which decrees: either the revolution must advance at a rapid, stormy, and resolute tempo, break down all barriers with an iron hand, and place its goals ever farther ahead, or it is quite soon thrown backward behind its feeble point of departure and suppressed by the counter-revolution. To stand still, to mark time on one spot, to be contented with the first goal it happens to reach, is never possible in revolution. And he who tries to apply the home-made wisdom derived from parliamentary battles between frogs and mice to the field of revolutionary tactics only shows thereby that the very psychology and laws of existence of revolution are alien to him and that all historical experience is to him a book sealed with seven seals.'

The attitude of the CP has crippled the UP; after initial advances, and despite tremendous economic gains, the UP today is retreating. The other major party of the UP, the Socialist Party, is too disorganized and heterogeneous to counter-balance the strong and disciplined CP; in every crucial encounter the CP line has triumphed over the more radical SP line. It is too early to tell, but at present it looks as if the UP will fail and that the parliamentary tactics of 'frogs and mice' have predominated.

The UP and the Bourgeois State

In September 1970 the UP, while professing to build socialism, found itself in the unusual historical position of having been legally elected to the government of a bourgeois state. The UP, a coalition of parties the majority of which are solidly based on the working class, had taken advantage of a split in the ranks of the bourgeoisie to gain this electoral victory.¹ The election gave the UP formal control of the executive branch

¹ The UP got 36.2 per cent of the votes. The 'liberal' bourgeoisie represented by the Christian Democrats got 27.8 per cent of the votes. The 'Conservative' bourgeoisie represented by the National Party but backing the 'independent' Alessandri, received 34.9 per cent of the votes. The two right-wing parties united forces shortly after the September elections in order to avoid another such defeat.

of the state, but the right remained in control of the congressional and judicial branches, as well as tax-collecting, state auditing, and the bureaucracy in general. Factions within the Armed Forces feel so threatened by the UP that they have backed several attempted *coups d'état*.² The majority of officers, however, have hitherto maintained official loyalty to the Constitution and the President. Any major attempt by the UP to sidestep the Constitution would undoubtedly provoke a military intervention.

The continued existence of the traditional Armed Forces means that the UP has been forced to try to gain control of the capitalist state using all the rules of the bourgeois legal system, and with the eventual goal of using electoral office to eliminate the present bourgeois state and create a worker's state. Historically, this puts the UP in an unusual position, and, to say the least, a very difficult one.

The UP's strategy was to use the considerable power of the executive branch to carry out some immediate economic reforms which would snap the economy out of the stagnation of the Frei years (nationalization of large industries, redistribution of income, state hiring of the unemployed, nationalization of the copper). The subsequent economic pickup was to be accompanied by mass political mobilizations, leading to an electoral majority for the UP (which would mean an increase from the 36.2 per cent of September 1970 to over 50 per cent). With an electoral majority the UP would be able to pass a new Constitution by plebiscite. The new Constitution would be the basis of a worker's state, replacing the old Congress, the old Judiciary, and the old state bureaucracy. The legality of this process would prevent the military from overthrowing the government, although serious internal stresses in the army were reckoned to be inevitable. At the same time that the process of political mobilization was carried out, the state would be expropriating the major industries and creating the basis for a new socialist economy.

This initial scenario seemed a plausible one. The first steps were carried out successfully. In the April 1971 municipal elections, the UP won an electoral majority. But at this point the plan stalled. The vital question

² The UP has discovered various military plans for a *coup d'état*. The assassination of General Schneider in October 1970 involved many officers of the Armed Forces in an attempt to prevent the UP from occupying the government. As a result of the assassination, the retired General Roberto Vial was jailed, and other high military officials forced into retirement, such as the head of the Navy, the generals in charge of the garrisons in Santiago and Concepcion, a general in the Air Force, and the national Chief of Police. In December 1971 the head of the Military School in Santiago, Colonel Labbe, was obliged to retire for plotting a putsch. He is now one of the leaders of the National Party. Army General Canales was forced into an early retirement in September 1972 for urging a coup. A French political scientist, Alain Joxe, has documented the dependence of the supposedly 'neutral' Chilean Armed Forces on US imperialism; *Las Fuerzas Armadas en el Sistema Político de Chile*, Santiago, 1970. This dependence, for training and technology, continues under Allende. For example, in October 1972, the Chilean Air Force and Navy participated in naval manoeuvres for 15 days with the US Task Force. In March 1972, the Chief of the US Air Force, General John Ryan, arrived in Chile as the special guest of the Chilean Air Force for the celebration of Air Forces Day. Allende participated in the ceremony and greeted Ryan cordially.

of state power was postponed: the planned Constitutional plebiscite was put off till an indefinite future date. At present the UP is belatedly preparing a new Constitution, but no date has been set for its presentation in a plebiscite. Meanwhile almost all observers agree that the UP has lost its momentum.

The UP's strategic perspectives are a reflection of the history of the Latin American left in the past decade. After the Cuban revolution, the left split into two general tendencies: the traditional left (usually the Communist Party) and the insurrectionary left (usually guerrillas). The Communist Parties, with temporary exceptions, maintained their customary tactics of participation in electoral politics and an indefinite postponement of insurrection, whereas the newer forces insisted upon the immediate necessity of armed revolt. The pro-Chinese Communist Parties that resulted from the Sino-Soviet dispute generally backed insurrection verbally but in practice neither organized nor participated in actual armed struggles (with the exception of Colombia).

After a decade of insurrectionary attempts, no group has been able to repeat the Cuban success. The guerrillas have either been crushed or stalemated. With this background, the UP rejuvenated an electoral strategy which most Latin American socialists (including many present members of the UP) had discarded. Chile was in many senses the best country for such an attempt. 75 per cent of its population is urban, making a rural guerrilla impracticable. The urban working class is the best organized in Latin America. Not only is there a strong CP, but also a strong SP which is not tied to Russian revisionism. These working class organizations were able to form a coalition with petty bourgeois parties which gave them an electoral victory, a victory which came as a surprise to much if not most of the Chilean left.³ This electoral success opened a pre-revolutionary era with maximum opportunities for mass mobilization and an intensification of the class struggle.

The UP victory looked so promising that other countries decided to try it. The *Frente Amplio* in Uruguay and the *Nueva Fuerza* in Venezuela copied the UP. But today the UP looks less attractive, the *Frente Amplio* has lost fraudulent elections, and the *Nueva Fuerza* has fallen apart before even getting to the polls. The original critiques of the insurrectionary left have gained a renewed vigour. These criticisms can be summarized in two charges: (1) the UP basically relies on bourgeois legality and (2) the UP lacks a vanguard party. These criticisms are not confined to Latin American leftists; Marxist and Leninist theory in general confirms them.

³ The principal parties involved in the UP are the large working class organization of the SP and CP, founded in 1933 and 1922 respectively. Also represented in the coalition are the smaller MAPU, a working class party founded as a split from the Christian Democrats in 1969, and the Radical Party, which is about the same size as MAPU and is based on the middle class. The trades union elections of June 1972 gave the SP and the CP about 30 per cent each, and the MAPU and the Radical Party about 5 per cent each. Other parties in the UP are small and less important. A left party that has remained outside of the UP is the MIR—*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* or Movement of (the) Revolutionary Left. The MIR was founded in 1965 and received 2-3 per cent of the votes in the elections to the cur—the *Central Unica de Trabajadores*, the trades union federation.

The UP hopes to gain control of political power without violence, respecting the bourgeois legal system. The building of socialism is to go on concurrently with the struggle for state power. Previous socialist revolutions have gained power militarily and then used state power to build socialism, exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat. Generally such revolutions have come about in times of war and economic collapse, when the army of the bourgeois state was in a weakened position (eg, Russia in 1917, Germany in 1918, or, the Paris Commune). A second alternative has been the conquest of power in wars of national liberation, with the official armed forces often supporting or supported by a foreign invader (eg, China, Algeria, Vietnam, and partially Cuba). Unless power is taken militarily any incipiently socialist government is burdened down with the weight of the whole bourgeois state apparatus, which, as Lenin pointed out so emphatically in *State and Revolution*, must be smashed or it will smash socialism. The UP has not taken power militarily. It has not only inherited the whole bourgeois state apparatus (whose bureaucracy is extremely oppressive in Chile), but it does not even nominally have full control of the state, only of its executive branch.

For the UP to have overcome the difficulties posed by its legal route, it would have had to focus resolutely on the question of power. Instead of promising a rapid solution of Chile's problems after the elections, it should have presented the electoral victory for what it was, an important step which had to be followed by further more difficult advances. The electoral victory should have been followed by a much more profound mass mobilization to lead to the real conquest of state power. Instead, the UP did the opposite. It glorified the anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly measures which it was able to carry out using control of the executive branch. But it refused to emphasize the urgent need to destroy the capitalist state apparatus as such, as the first step in building socialism. In this sense it followed the traditional theories of the Communist Party, which is willing to postpone the struggle for socialism indefinitely.⁴

A second criticism of the UP is that it lacks a disciplined vanguard party. Previous working class movements which have lacked a strong vanguard party have failed (the Paris Commune, the 1905 Russian Revolution, the Bolivian and Mexican revolutions). The UP coalition links strong working class parties with weak petty bourgeois parties. This coalition was necessary to gain an electoral victory, and sections of the

⁴ On the other hand, an *a priori* condemnation of any electoral perspective imposed an obligation to propose an alternative strategy, capable of defeating a well-trained and well-equipped army, in a country where the military are not generally hated, as they were in Cuba or are in Argentina. One possible approach to this would have been a movement along the lines of the Tupamaros in Uruguay (a country which also had an army which remained in the background), prepared to struggle for years in the hope of eventually winning the backing of the major working class parties or at least their rank-and-file. Such a strategy was conceivable in Chile given the example of the Tupamaros, and was in fact the strategy chosen by MIRA before 1970, but like the UP itself it involved tremendous difficulties. A second possible strategy might have been to drive towards the intermediate building of something like soviets, and the internal collapse of the army. This alternative seemed impractical before 1970 in as much as it required a weakness on the part of the bourgeois state which Chile did not exhibit.

petty bourgeoisie correctly identified their interests with a proletarian leadership which was attacking big capital. However, in order to build socialism, this coalition would have had to tighten itself considerably, based on a revolutionary programme. Instead stupid sectarianism has reigned supreme, despite everyone's criticism of it. It has proved impossible to integrate the MTR into the UP; instead a tremendous open conflict has developed between the CP and the MTR. The situation in this respect is reminiscent of the confusion reigning in Cuba during the early days when it was thought possible to group all political parties which supported the revolution together in a loose coalition. That coalition proved ineffective and was replaced by the PURSC which became the present Cuban CP. A comparable step is necessary in Chile. Although a unification of parties is impossible at this time or in the near future, the problem is that no one has even ever proposed it. The objective need was to create a tight and disciplined UP which was consciously moving towards unity through internal struggle. Instead there are party quotas in all state agencies; far too many militants conceive of the UP as just another government and retain their old party loyalty, realizing that the party was responsible for getting them their bureaucratic post. Keeping in mind the UP's failure to confront the two major socialist criticisms of its strategy, we can now review the concrete record of the UP government.

The Initial Period : State Control of the Economy

The critical perspectives of the UP were two-fold, economic and political. Economically, its aim was to take some immediate measures to pull the economy out of the stagnation of the last years of the Fre government. It also sought to constitute a strong state-controlled sector of the economy, which would serve as the basis of a future socialist economy, and would meanwhile gradually undercut the economic foundations of the Chilean Right. This public sector would also embrace a vast work-force and provide a demonstration of what the UP conceived to be worker's control.

Politically, the UP's goal was to extend its electoral victory. Using the short-term gains of economic recovery to attract new solid support, and mobilizing sectors of the population which were unorganized, the UP hoped to gain control of the entire governmental apparatus and at the same time eliminate old legal and bureaucratic 'forms'. This goal was to be attained by passing a new Constitution. To this end, and also in order to insure the correct functioning of the economy against right wing sabotage, it was considered necessary to create new popular organizations. These were the CERA's (Centros de Reforma Agraria) and the Peasant Councils in the countryside, and the Production Committees and Administration Councils in the state-controlled factories in the city. The CERA's are the new state farms resulting from the rapid extension of the agrarian reform, and the Peasant Councils are locally elected peasant congresses representing the reformed sectors of agriculture and the smallholders. The Peasant Councils should have been given more real responsibility to oversee the Agrarian Reform and the distribution of technical assistance. Unfortunately the bureaucratic institutions set up to oversee the Agrarian Reform have too ofte

remained in control, and they have many members left over from the Frei administration. (The UP is using an Agrarian Reform Bill passed in 1967 by Frei.)

In the towns, the Production Committees and Administration Councils exist only in state-controlled industries. The Production Committees in the factories are wide-spread and generally successful in overseeing efficient production. The Administrative Councils are made up of five workers and five government administrators; these councils are the new management of state-controlled industries. They have suffered from the patronizing and bureaucratic style of the government representatives, who have at times appeared to believe that theirs were the privileges of the old owners. The workers need to be able to replace them easily; instead proletarian opposition to a government administrator has to wage long struggles to win a replacement. The workers themselves on the Administrative Council are elected once a year. Other important organizations set up in the city are the JAP (*Juntas de Abastecimiento y Control de Precios*). The JAP are neighbourhood committees set up to avoid speculation and oversee distribution of popular items to consumers. They have been widely established and are extremely necessary; so far they have had some success but need to be greatly strengthened. Vigilance Committees have been proposed for private industries; they were an important conception but have unfortunately not been widely constituted.

How did the strategy of the UP work out in the first months? The initial economic measures were very successful. The monopolistic character of the economy had left a large amount of unemployment and unused industrial capacity. The 6 per cent unemployment rate (7.1 per cent in Santiago) went down to 3.8 per cent (5.5 per cent in Santiago) in 1971, halving the average for the previous decade. Industrial production went from some 75 per cent capacity in the years 1969 and 1970 to between 90-100 per cent in 1971. This increased use of capacity and man-power enabled industrial production to jump from an average yearly increase of 2 per cent during 1967-70 to an increase of 10.9 per cent in 1971.⁵ The increased production permitted an important redistribution of income and a 13.5 per cent rise in consumption of popular items in 1971. Workers generally received a 20-30 per cent increase in real wages. Blue collar workers (daily wage workers) controlled 60.7 per cent of the national income in 1971, as opposed to 51 per cent in 1970. Capitalist owners of businesses absorbed this transfer; their share in the national income went down from 18.6 per cent in 1970 to 8.3 per cent in 1971. The copper industry, representing 70 per cent of Chile's exports, was nationalized in the middle of 1971. The agrarian reform was speeded up tremendously: today half of Chile's arable land is included in the reformed area and the majority of the land expropriable under the 1967 law has been expropriated. Major factories were taken over. Inflation was kept down to 2.2 per cent in 1971 as compared to an average 26.5 per cent in the years 1965-70.

⁵ The statistics on industrial production here derive from SOFOFA, the organization of business owners. SOFOFA is violently against the government but is nevertheless forced to admit UP economic successes. The other statistics in this paragraph are from ONEPLAN, the state planning agency.

The situation in the first year of the UP in Chile was thus similar to that of the early phase of the Cuban revolution. Obviously rational measures yielded tremendous early social benefits for the masses. Only later did the reaction of the Right, through sabotage and boycott, and of imperialism, through its 'invisible blockade', begin to take effect. The big economic advances of the first six months led to a UP victory in the April 1971 municipal elections. The UP, facing a now united right-wing, got 50.9 per cent of the vote, up from its 36.2 per cent in the September 1970 elections. The SP registered the biggest gains on the left. With this tremendous electoral improvement, the UP was in a position to take the offensive and fundamentally attack the political nature of the existing state. The UP Programme states that 'a new political constitution will institutionalize the massive incorporation of the people into state power. . . The People's Assembly will be the single house that will express popular sovereignty at the national level'. April 1971 was the correct moment to press on with a vote on a new constitution, but the UP failed to do so. This was a fundamental mistake, an inability or an unwillingness to see the problem of political power as the central issue of the struggle for socialism in Chile. The inability arose from an under-estimation of the enormous problems ahead; the unwillingness arose from a fear that perhaps it was too soon for a plebiscite and that to organize one would be moving too fast.

The Right-wing Counter-offensive and the UP Response

The opportune moment passed rapidly. Counter-revolutionary sabotage and imperialist blockade took far more serious tolls than the UP had expected, despite its public emphasis on these dangers. With excess industrial capacity exhausted and unemployment low, production was unable to increase rapidly except through an expansion of the state sector and a more rationalized and centralized plan of production. But the Chilean bourgeoisie used its Congressional majority and its control of the majority of the media (65 per cent of the newspapers printed, for example, support the Right) to block the expansion of the state sector. Meanwhile imperialism—above all the United States—denied new credits through the World Bank, the Export-Import Bank, the Inter American Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The US, fighting to defend its \$1 billion investment in Chile (in a country where the GNP is about \$10 billion, the state budget about \$700 million, and exports about \$1 billion) pressured through the IMF to hinder the re-negotiation of Chile's foreign debt in the Paris talks in early 1972. These pressures, added to the drop in the world price of copper (from 64 to 49 cents a pound, costing Chile \$400 million in two years), have led to an extreme scarcity of dollars for imports, a lack of parts to keep the machines going (most parts in Chile, as they did in Cuba, come from the US), and general economic privation. Precious dollars have also had to be spent for food imports, which have more than doubled under Allende. Chile now buys about \$400 million worth of food a year, at prices which have gone up an estimated 40 per cent since 1970. (Increased imports are necessary to cover increased consumption; since 1970 internal production has gone up only 6 per cent, while consumption has gone up by 25 per cent.) In 1972 high demand, short supply and large emissions of new money led to the highest

inflation in Chile's history. By December inflation was running at an incredible 164 per cent. It was difficult to buy many products, even hitherto common ones. The working class showed astonishing tolerance of these conditions but the UP still suffered. Small businessmen and white-collar workers who once supported the Allende government went over to the opposition, and thereby weakened the government's prospective strength for the coming elections.

Having failed to take advantage of its temporary electoral majority, the UP began to implement its long term economic strategy. This meant a drive to bring large industries under state control in order to provide a base for the construction of socialism. The result of this thrust was stalemate. Public control of the economy was great, but it was not decisive, and it was apparent that further advances in the economic field were impossible without more political power, specifically without destroying the present Congress. Having missed its opportunity in 1971, the UP was then forced to confront the problem of state power in 1972. The economic crisis and right-wing offensive of September-October 1972 have clearly shown that the bourgeoisie has more than enough capacity to wreak havoc with the Chilean economy.

The UP has used two different methods to gain control of the larger industries. One was to buy up the stocks, bringing enterprises under the control of the State Development Corporation (CORFO). The other was to requisition firms using almost forgotten legislation from the 1930s which permits the state temporarily to take over the management of industries. Justifications for requisition are owner sabotage of production or owner refusal to co-operate in solving a paralysing labour dispute. Requisitions are theoretically temporary, but no factory taken over has yet been returned to its old owners; requisitions give the state control of both management and profits. Through purchases or requisitions, the UP has gradually extended the grip of the government over the key industries in the economy (the copper industry is an exception; it was recovered through a Constitutional Reform). The bourgeoisie reacted to this campaign by initiating legislation in October 1971 to restrict the government's right to take over industries and to force a strict definition of the state's powers of economic intervention. The government responded by announcing that all industries which had a tax value of over 14 million escudos in December 1970 were to be eligible for expropriation. The Rightist move was framed as a Constitutional Reform, to make special legislation necessary in Congress for each industry that the state wished to requisition or purchase. (Constitutional Reforms can be passed by Congress without a popular vote.)

In the midst of this parliamentary skirmishing, an important political event took place. In December 1971, during the visit of Fidel Castro to Chile, the bourgeoisie staged a mass demonstration against the government. The march was called the 'march of the empty pots' in protest against supposed food shortages, which at that time were scarcely noticeable. The protest, which was largely middle-class in character and involved organized violence by right-wing para-military groups, showed for the first time the power of Chilean capital to mobilize a mass base

in the streets. Fidel called attention to the danger of fascism in Chile, provoking heated controversies amongst the left. Fidel's speeches and the popular response to them indicated the scope for a counter-mobilization against the right.

Meanwhile the debate over the Constitutional Reform Bill of the Right continued. In January 1972 President Allende published a list of 91 key industries which the government planned to bring under state control. In February, Congress passed the Constitutional Reform, this time with the added stipulation that all industries taken over by the state since October 1971 were to be returned to their old owners. Allende vetoed the bill in June. At that point the UP began serious negotiations with the Christian Democrats to work out an agreement before a final vote on the veto took place in Congress. This decision to negotiate represented the triumph of the CP line; the SP opposed negotiations and proposed mass mobilizations and a plebiscite.

In July the Christian Democrats felt strong enough to break off negotiations and over-ride the presidential veto. The government then maintained that the opposition did not have enough votes in Congress to do this and that the Constitutional Reform Bill would have to be sent to a special Constitutional Tribunal (where the UP has a 3 to 2 majority) to resolve the complicated legal questions involved. The Right claims it does have enough votes legally to over-ride presidential vetoes and rejects the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Tribunal. So far the Right has over-ridden the vetoes in the Senate and sent the bill on to the House of Deputies, where no action has yet been taken. Were the House of Deputies to over-ride the vetoes, the executive would appeal to the Constitutional Tribunal. Meanwhile the Right has effectively slowed down the process of purchases and requisitions. By mid-November 1972, 12 industries had been bought by the Development Corporation and 36 had been requisitioned. This leaves 42 industries on the government list in private hands (the list had been cut from 91 to 90).

The pro-UP economist Alberto Martinez estimates that at present the government controls about 20 per cent of industrial production, outside the mining sector.⁶ He calculates that if the 90 industries were all under government management, the state would control 30 per cent of industry, with 150,000 workers in the public sector and 300,000 in the private sector. Martinez argues that with such a 30 per cent control, the Allende government would be able to maintain a precarious steerage of the economy as a whole, given that public industries would be the largest and most important ones. It is interesting to note that the UP controlled slightly less than 30 per cent of major industrial production before Allende. With that 30 per cent it was much easier for American imperialism to exercise a control over the economy in its entirety; the UP, on the other hand, has to fight the pressures of both imperialism and the Chilean private sector, making effective control much more difficult. The UP has been able to win command of banking and most

⁶ See the 1-7 September 1972 issue of *Chile Hoy*, an able pro-governmental weekly magazine.

foreign commerce, since all but one of the major banks has been requisitioned, and the state can determine dollar acquisitions and therefore imports and exports (except for contraband, which is widespread).

The Economic Importance of the Chilean State

It is important to analyse the power of the public sector in the Chilean economy, a power upon which the UP has over-relied, to the detriment of mass mobilization. The Chilean economy is monopoly-capitalist in character, with the state playing an extremely important role in recent years. An excellent recent study by the economist Sergio A. Ramos Cordova shows that in the largest 271 Chilean corporations, the 10 biggest stockholders on average control between 90-100 per cent of the stock.⁷ This amounts to a formidable concentration of capital. The families of Edwards, Yarur, Sumar, Said, and Briones are famous for their huge holdings (the Yarur family, for example, owned two large banks and five or six of the large textile mills). These monopolists used the state to do much of their investing for them. Thus the state accounted for 46.6 per cent of net investment in fixed capital in 1961, and 74.8 per cent of this investment in 1969. This investment was both direct and indirect. The rate of indirect investment rose most rapidly; such investment meant that private interests received both production and profits. Even though the state was responsible for 74.8 per cent of net investment in fixed capital in 1969, it owned only 19.4 per cent of production (10 per cent in the public industries and 9.4 per cent in the central government). Large monopolies were thus able to use the capitalist state extensively as a source of private profit. The Development Corporation, set up in the late 1930s under the Chilean Popular Front, is famous for building up industries until they were profitable and then turning them over to private business. A good example is the Pacific Steel Plant, the only steel mill in Chile. It was established by CORFO in 1946; by 1966 private interests controlled 64.7 per cent of the total capital. The UP regained control in 1971. These figures indicate the degree to which the bourgeois state was used as a vehicle of financial development by Chilean monopolists. The wide powers of the executive to intervene in the economy as a whole through its control of the public sector, led the UP to hope that it could turn the tables on the bourgeoisie and use the same state to build a socialist sector of the economy which would eventually dominate the capitalist sector. In practice, the Constitutional Reform Bill passed by Congress has blocked further extension of the public sector, while economic pressure from imperialism has helped to cripple the existing sector which the Allende government does control.

US Imperialism: the Invisible Blockade

Despite the UP's reiteration of the dangers of imperialism, it was not

⁷ See *Chile: Una Economía de Transición?* by Sergio A. Ramos Cordova. This book was published in July 1972 in Cuba and in November 1972 by CERO in Chile. Many of the statistics used by Ramos in his discussion of investment come from a study by ODEPLAN, the state planning agency, called 'La Inversión Pública en el período 1961-1970', published in Santiago in 1971.

prepared for the damage that the USA has done to the economy. Furthermore, the UP has not been able to create a strong mass consciousness of the US responsibility for many of the current problems of the Chilean economy (the Anderson revelations about IRR in Chile helped somewhat). The US holdings in Chile were extensive. Although it is difficult to disentangle the legal jungle which hid North American control, it is known that the US had more than a billion dollars invested in Chile, with profits estimated at some \$500 million a year.⁸ A study made in August 1972 by the Development Corporation estimates that total foreign investment in 1970 was \$1.672 billion, of which the US share was some \$1.1 billion. If we take the round figure of \$1 billion, it is calculated that some \$600 million was invested in mining (principally copper), and some \$400 million in manufacturing and commerce. Foreign investment *in toto* controlled 19 per cent of Chilean industry and participated without control in another 6.5 per cent. In the dominant industries, foreign interests controlled 30.4 per cent and participated in 13.2 per cent.⁹ With such extensive expatriate control of mining and industry, it is understandable that Gunder Frank should call the Chilean capitalist class a 'lumpen-bourgeoisie'. Aside from outright control through ownership, Chilean industry used largely US machinery and was dependent on the US for technology. This dependence was greatest where the industries were most modern, and in industries which were growing rapidly—rubber, electric machines, refinement of metals, and lumber. In addition to North American control through technology and ownership, the United States government also exercised great indirect economic power through international finance institutions.

Internationally, the US has traditionally dominated the Chilean economy through its manipulation of credits. When Allende became president, Chile had a foreign debt of over \$3 billion (not counting some \$700 million in debts which Chile inherited when it nationalized the copper industry), which made it the second most indebted country *per capita* in the world, after Israel. Although the UP has unfortunately not published extensive details of this foreign debt and its re-negotiation in Paris, we can assume that the servicing of the debt required payments of some \$400 million a year in 1971 and 1972. The payments of the debt would have ordinarily been financed with more loans, in typical loan shark

⁸ These round figures come from a study by Pedro Vuskovic, made in 1970 and cited in the 22 July 1972 issue of the newspaper *Ultima Hora*. Vuskovic was the Minister of the Economy from November 1970 until June 1972. He was the symbol of the aggressive requisitioning of large industries by the UP. He was sacrificed in June 1972 as part of the decision to open negotiations with the Christian Democrats about the Constitutional Reform Bill; his removal came largely as a result of the intransigence of the CP. He is now vice-president of CONAFO, the state Development Agency. The architect of the policy of negotiations with the Christian Democrats, Orlando Millas, became Minister of the Treasury when Vuskovic was removed from the Cabinet.

⁹ These figures are for the years 1968–1969. Of the industries defined as dominant industries, foreign capital participated in 43.6 per cent. In 20.7 per cent of their foreign capital (largely US) owned more than 50 per cent of the stock. In 9.7 per cent it owned between 20–50 per cent of the stock. In 13.2 per cent it owned less than 20 per cent of the stock. Ramos defines effective control as those cases where foreign capital owned 20 per cent or more of the stock. Using CONAFO's estimate, we can assume that about 70 per cent of foreign capital means US capital.

fashion. The World Bank, the IMF, the Export-Import Bank, and IDB are all expert in such transactions. Since Washington instructed these institutions to refuse loans to the Allende government in Chile, however, almost no new credit has been forthcoming which could help service the foreign debt. This has led Chile to ask for a re-negotiation of it. In February 1972 Chilean representatives met with the major creditors in Paris, and after extensive talks finally arrived at an agreement in April. Although the details of this re-negotiation are not known, it is clear that 70 per cent of the debt was re-financed over a newly extended period of eight years, with a period of grace for that 70 per cent (no payment) between November 1971 and December 1972. The IMF was to be given access to Chile's books and to report back to the creditors (governments and international banks) to assure them that Chile was managing its economy 'correctly'. Chile had asked for better terms, including a period of grace from November 1971 to December 1974. On the other hand, the US (by far the major creditor) had asked Chile to sign a 'stand-by' agreement with the IMF which would have meant that the IMF could have rather strictly controlled Chile's internal economy, by regulating state expenditures.¹⁰ The US pressured the other creditors to force Chile to accept the IMF stand-by plan. At the same time, the Nixon regime continually tried to link a successful re-negotiation with payments for the expropriated US copper companies. Chile withstood this barrage and took advantage of recent conflicts in the capitalist bloc to win the support of many European countries, which in turn forced the US to drop some of its demands. The details of the re-negotiation are to be worked out between Chile and each creditor following the guidelines set up in Paris. The US-Chile terms have not yet been determined; negotiations were begun in October 1972. In August, State Department spokesman Charles Bray had already announced that the bi-lateral negotiations would have to consider the Chilean nationalization of the American copper companies.

The net result of the re-negotiation is that Chile delayed payments on some of its debts. In 1972 Chile paid only \$150 million of some \$400 million it owed. Chile will henceforward have to pay new interest on the difference of some \$250 million, and will have to return to Paris in 1973 to ask for a new period of grace. It has to submit to inspections by the IMF. It has to find some way to negotiate bilaterally with the US (one option, so far rejected by the US, would be to renounce the debt with

¹⁰ According to Alfonso Inostroza, president of the Chilean Central Bank, Chile owes \$1.2 billion to the United States. Interest payments on this amount total \$130 million a year. See *El Mercurio* of 16 December 1972. This figure does not include the debts of the copper companies assumed by Chile upon nationalization. It should be remembered that the debt negotiated with the Club of Paris covered only public debts with the US, that is, Chilean debts to AID, Eximbank, and private debts guaranteed by Eximbank. According to the Chilean ambassador to the US, Orlando Letelier, the public debt comes to payments of slightly more than \$100 million a year. By the terms worked out in Paris, Chile should have paid some \$30 million of this. In 1972 no payments were made. (See interview with Letelier in *Chile Hoy* December 29-4 January 1973.) It is interesting to note that Chilean debts to private American banks were re-negotiated without problem in January 1972, indicating that the US position on the public debt involves political principles which are more pressing than the desire for actual payment. The US would probably remove obstacles in the re-negotiation in exchange for a Chilean acceptance of its 'responsibility' to pay indemnification to the expropriated copper companies.

the us). Chile's foreign reserves are extremely low and its shortage of dollars is notorious. All this results from an attempt to pay back debts contracted under the worst of terms under the previous Frei government.

Chile's present situation should be compared with Chile under Frei. Between 1966 and 1970 Frei contracted a foreign debt of \$2.395 billion, requiring a repayment of \$380 million a year. This was the heritage left to Allende. Credits flowed freely to the Frei government. The debt contracted by Frei was short-term. In 1965 60 per cent of Chile's foreign debt fell due in a period greater than 15 years, whereas with the \$2.395 billion contracted by Frei only 34 per cent fell due in a period of greater than 15 years. Frei left Chile a debtor and cut off credits to Allende.¹¹

This extended discussion of us control of the Chilean economy shows that the us made no adequate contingency plans for the 'invisible blockade' and its effects on the economy ('invisible' because the us has not called openly for an economic blockade of Chile—but the denial of credits, spare parts, and technology has a similar effect). This lack of preparation on the part of the us intensified the inevitable effects of the 'invisible blockade' unnecessarily. Allende's trip to the UN was a first step to try to remedy this problem.

In addition to the 'invisible blockade', open aggression has been waged by Kennecott Copper, supported if not planned by the Nixon administration. Kennecott's attempt to boycott Chile's copper in Europe (where Chile markets over 60 per cent of its output) came at a crucial time when the us government was negotiating new copper deals for 1973. If the boycott is successful, the Chilean economy would be severely damaged. Sales of copper from the ex-Kennecott holdings come to some \$180 million from a sale of 180 thousand metric tons, out of a total foreign sale of 750 thousand metric tons. If Kennecott's boycott were effective, it is probable that Anaconda would also initiate actions to recover copper from its ex-holdings, which are far larger than Kennecott's. So far the French courts have fortunately ruled in favour of Chile, but the psychological effect of the threat has damaged Chile's prospects for future foreign sales.¹²

October 1972: the Rightists' Renewed Offensive

The economic problems caused by bourgeois counter-attack and imperialist blockade finally exploded into open political crisis within Chile in August 1972. High demand and inadequate supply (it seems industrial production probably rose only about 3 per cent in 1972)

¹¹ These figures come from an article by Fernando Fajnzylber in *Chile Hoy* of 4-10 August 1972. Fajnzylber is an economist who works with the government office of foreign economic affairs.

¹² For details on the history of the Chilean copper industry and an understanding of the present boycott, see *La Batalla Por El Cobre* by Eduardo Novoa, Montreal, Santiago 1972; also *New Chile*, published by NACLA in 1972 in Berkeley, which contains an article on copper by Marc Herold. The figures on foreign sales of copper are provided by an interview with Jorge Arrate, the Vice-President of CODELCO, in *Chile Hoy* of 13-19 October 1972. CODELCO is the state copper company.

unleashed massive inflation and a hectic black market. Low official prices led to rampant speculation; the market economy was visibly undermining the state sector, instead of the other way around. The government decided on huge price increases to end speculation. Many popular items went up 100 per cent. These price hikes were not adequately explained to the masses. They affected the poor more than the rich, since the rich had more liquid capital. The 100 per cent across-the-board pay rises ordered to compensate for inflation did not go into effect until two months after the price increases, and their non-discriminatory nature did nothing to further a re-distribution of income. The Right took advantage of the momentary discontent of large sectors of the population to launch a series of provocations in early September which resulted in six dead and thousands arrested in only a few weeks. Certain factions of the bourgeoisie (led by the factory owners, represented by the National Party) were clearly attempting to provoke a military *coup d'état* to 'rescue the country from chaos'.

The events of September recalled the 'march of the empty pots' of December 1971 and Fidel's warning about fascism. It should be noted that Chile unites many of the conditions necessary for fascism: economic crisis, far-right parties with some mass backing, demagogic leaders capable of mobilizing an extremely unhappy middle and lower-middle class, organized para-military groups like *Patria y Libertad* and *Comando Rolando Matos*, and so on. To confront the crisis, the UP organized a massive support march: the large and militant turnout of two million workers throughout Chile discouraged the fascist sectors of the Right. So did the opportune revelation by Allende of some of the details of the conspiratorial 'September Plan' to bring down the government.

But the Right was only temporarily thwarted. The plans for September were put off till October. The general bourgeois offensive began with a transport strike by truck owners. (These owners had signed an agreement in September covering their economic demands, which they had publicly proclaimed as more than satisfactory. They struck in October for political, not economic reasons.) The truck owners' strike was followed two days later by a strike by shopkeepers. Sympathy strikes were quickly called by the professional organizations of doctors, nurses, engineers, lawyers, bank employees, and airline pilots. This bourgeois 'general strike' partially paralysed the country. Counter-revolutionary attempts to close down the factories, however, met with stubborn working-class resistance, and plants remained open. The government declared Emergency Zones in 22 of the 25 provinces; the Army was put in charge of the maintenance of 'law and order' and political demonstrations were banned. The military were also used to deal with over 200 rightist attempts at sabotage (including some dozen dynamitings of railway tracks and the burning down of part of a large textile plant in Concepcion). The government and the working class were able to keep production limping along, with the help of the Armed Forces. But the UP could not defeat the strike. The economy suffered huge damage; the Minister of the Economy estimated the cost of the 26-day strike at \$200 million. The crisis was only resolved after the UP made the decisive political concession of bringing three major

military figures, including the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, into the Cabinet.

The National Party had hoped to overthrow the Allende government during the strike, but the Army proved reluctant to carry out a *coup*. The more moderate Christian Democratic Party, on the other hand, was fully satisfied with the military Cabinet. The image of the UP had been damaged, and the presence of the Armed Forces in the government provided solid guarantees for the upcoming March Congressional elections. The UP had been forced to rely on the classical repressive enemy of the working class to break a strike led by the bourgeoisie, instead of relying on the working class itself. The Christian Democrats had maintained their dominance within the bourgeois camp and now confidently awaited the elections.

The October offensive of the bourgeoisie further polarized the Chilean political scene. Every organization, and almost every individual, was forced to take a position for or against the government. The strike clarified the strengths and the weaknesses of all class forces. The bourgeoisie showed that it had a large amount of mass support, having brought most of the petty bourgeoisie (small owners, white-collar workers) over to its side. Many of these strata originally sided with the UP, but have since swung to the side which was apparently stronger. The government was critically weakened. The working class, on the other hand, showed renewed strength and imagination. Important new organizations, the Co-ordinating Committees, were set up during the strike with the official backing of the SP and the MIR. The function of these committees was to unify all organizations in a local area to run the economy of that area without the participation of property owners. Although so far limited in number, they potentially represent an important step towards workers' control. In general, during the strike the working class was forced to rely on its own resources and did an admirable job of it. Finally, the Armed Forces showed that they reject a *coup* for the time being, agreeing with the Christian Democrats that the UP could be destroyed legally. Their immediate job in the government was to impose a temporary truce in the class struggle, discouraging the working class from pressing its demands.

The Aftermath of the Attempted Truce

Following the attempt by the military to impose a truce, the economy continued to deteriorate. On 10 January 1973 the Minister of the Treasury Fernando Flores made a major speech announcing that the UP would install some kind of rationing of basic products. The Allende government was forced to take this step, despite fears that it would cost votes in March, because of the spiralling growth of the black market. Oil, detergents, sugar, toothpaste, toilet paper, coffee, cigarettes, and other essential products are almost unavailable, or rarely available, in much of established commerce. Instead they are sold at two or three times the official price illegally. The UP was forced to take drastic steps to insure delivery of basic goods at official prices. The government, however, has not yet produced any effective measures to implement the promised controls. Mass organizations of the exploited

classes, especially the JAP, the Co-ordinating Committees, and the Peasant Councils, have organized entire local distribution systems on their own, while the government has stalled. The government-controlled distribution system, DINAC, controls only about a third of the circulation of basic consumer goods: the rest is in the private sector. The bourgeoisie has virtually ceased to invest in industry or agriculture, and used its capital to speculate on the black market, buying huge quantities of goods, hoarding them, and later selling them at a large profit. The government is unable to cope with the situation; only real mass mobilization can crush the black market. The revolutionary solution of the distribution problem is the same as the solution of the production problem—workers' control, not governmental bureaucracy. Many JAP have organized rationing cards and picked up goods directly from DINAC, thereby assuring a necessary minimum supply of commodities at official prices, without the exasperating queues that confront all Chilean shoppers (except black market buyers). The Right claims that the incompetent tyranny of the government is responsible for the hoarding and black market, and is hoping for electoral gains by attacking alleged up plans to install a 'Cuban' dictatorship to control food consumption. The Chilean bourgeoisie is thus profiting both economically and politically from the black market crisis. On 22 January 1973, the government announced the formation of a National Secretariat of Distribution to train inspectors to discover black market operations and to supervise the action both of established commerce and the JAP. Five military officers are to occupy key posts in this organization, following the line started with military entry into the Cabinet. Still no definite rationing system has been imposed.

Meanwhile the Right has developed a new tactic to block governmental control of industries, this time using the judicial branch of the State. Some 30 requisitioned industries have been placed under judicial embargo (called *precautoria*). The courts have ruled that the state manager (*interventor*) of newly requisitioned factories cannot make any decisions without the agreement of a representative of the old owners, who is appointed as a temporary co-manager. This ruling in effect hinders if not stops production in the affected industries, five of which are on the list of the 90 industries scheduled for permanent control by the government. This new twist of the Right is extremely dangerous and the judges' decisions are now being appealed by the UP in the courts. But the latter have consistently inclined to the right and have become an increasingly important weapon of the bourgeois parties in their general political offensive.

The government has for its part presented to Congress a new bill to regulate the requisition of industries. Orlando Millas, the Communist Minister of Economy, presented this measure on 24 January. The next day, in a surprising move, the Socialist Party publicly pronounced itself against the bill, claiming it proposed the return of several requisitioned industries to their former proprietors and stating that the Socialist Party had not been previously informed of the measure. Four days later Allende, himself a member of the Socialist Party, publicly backed the new bill and repudiated his own party, counter-claiming they had been fully informed. Allende, as so often before, sided with

the Communist Millas against his own Socialist Party. The resolution of this dispute cannot be foreseen, but in any case the bill presented to Congress will not be considered till after the March elections; in addition, it overlaps the pending right wing Constitutional Reform Bill on requisitioning still in the House of Deputies.

Abroad, Allende's recent tour helped Chile's diplomatic position considerably, and was probably influential in the refusal of German and Italian courts (so far) to permit Kennecott to embargo other copper shipments in those countries. But another test will soon come with the new re-negotiations of the foreign debt in Paris. Chilean success therefore depends on two factors—European support and the degree of us opposition. European support may now be diminished because France will not back Chile as strongly as it did in 1972; since the Pompidou regime no longer looks so tolerantly on the Allende experience, given that the latter has served as a model for the French Union of the Left. The extent of American opposition depends on the outcome of the surprise bilateral talks begun in December 1972 between Chile and the us on all aspects of relations between the two countries. The Nixon administration will continue to attempt to force Chile to acknowledge 'responsibility' to pay indemnification to the expropriated copper companies. This concession is vital for Washington in order to quash the judicial precedent set by Allende for establishing the concept of 'excess' profits: for it was on the basis of this notion that the Chilean government decreed that no compensation would be paid to the American copper companies. Acknowledgement by Chile of its responsibility to pay and indemnify could even be more symbolic than real; it is the principle which counts for us imperialism as a whole. It is in fact rumoured that the us State Department has told Chile it will lend Chile the money on easy terms to pay off the proposed indemnification. Such an agreement would then lead to a smoother re-negotiation in Paris. The us government, however, cannot easily back down on its most proudly proclaimed achievement within Chile. There are some sections of the coalition which are seeking a kind of accommodation on the question which will ease Chile's balance of payments crisis, perhaps short of an open capitulation to the us. The new negotiations represent a dangerous diplomatic move. There is no doubt that the correct line would be a refusal to discuss compensation for the copper companies and a denunciation of the bilateral public debt with the us until such time as the Nixon regime ceases its aggressive economic blockade and offers realistic terms for the financial re-negotiation, within the standards set up by the Club of Paris.

The Need for Mass Mobilization

Since the October crisis the political environment in Chile might best be described as an uneasy truce. The presence of the military in the Cabinet naturally prevents the us from organizing a vigorous proletarian offensive. Yet it is above all this that is needed. It is doubtful whether the March Congressional elections will change anything (assuming the major political forces continue with their present strategies). In order fundamentally to change the present balance, the us would have to either receive more than 50 per cent of the vote or

less than 33.3 per cent of the vote, either win a majority or lose the present third which now permits it to block major right-wing legislation.¹³ Neither alternative looks likely; instead it looks as if the UP will receive some 40-45 per cent and the opposition the rest.

With the Right remaining in control of Congress, the UP would face the same obstacles that it has been unable to overcome during the past two years. The prospect would be for three more years of the same stalemate, until the presidential elections of 1976. This would mean the Allende government resting on the laurels of its anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist reforms, while indefinitely postponing the building of socialism—in other words, the strategy of the CP. Eventually this would probably mean a return to full-blown capitalism with a very strong public sector.

In order to avoid this fate, the UP would have to organize a profound mass mobilization. What should be the transitional objectives for such a mobilization? One could still be the traditional aim of a new constitution to provide a superior legal framework for revolutionary advance towards a future worker's state. A second essential goal should be the construction of solid popular organizations of dual power. The Peasant Councils and the Co-ordinating Committees are organizations which grew up spontaneously because of obvious class needs. Such bodies need to be enormously strengthened. The Chilean proletariat learned from the bourgeois general strike that it needs its own direct organizations of economic and political power. The present government has shown that it does not provide such organizations. The Peasant Councils, the Co-ordinating Committees, the Production Committees, and the JAP, provide an anticipation of them. Such organizations could become the germs of a future worker's state. The UP government should take advantage of its tenuous control of sections of the bourgeois state at least to neutralize repression against potential organs of dual power and to create the space for bureaucracy-free popular councils to develop from below. Such concrete organizations of mass struggle are needed in the short run in any case, to confront a possible repetition of the October strike or the permanent possibility of a military putsch.

As of now, the UP has shown little inclination to adopt such a strategy. Even if it wanted to, the difficulties are today much greater than a year

¹³ At present, the Right can pass new regular legislation with its majority control of Congress. Allende, however, can veto such legislation and the Right needs a two-thirds majority to insist. This means that at present neither the government nor the opposition can pass new legislation without the agreement of the other. There are different procedures for a Constitutional Reform. The Right is at present claiming that it needs only a simple majority to over-ride the President's vetos in such cases. The government denies this, and is appealing to the Constitutional Tribunal for a decision. The Right can resort to another tactic, Constitutional impeachment of a Cabinet member or a governor or mayor. With a simple majority, Congress can accuse such a public figure of violating the Constitution and force his resignation. The Congress has done this with two Ministers of the Interior, and several governors and mayors. In order to impeach the President, however, the Congress needs a two-thirds majority. Were the Right to receive a two-thirds majority in March, it could force Allende's resignation.

ago. Economic crisis without political gain has driven many sectors of the population into the camp of counter-revolution. The Allende government bears in this respect a close resemblance to the Russian Provisional Government between February and October 1917. Although it still has the support of the overwhelming majority of the working class, it is losing strength in as much as it does not lead that majority to the seizure of proletarian state power.

Despite the obstacles, such an offensive strategy is the only alternative to simply treading water. It should be remembered that there remain huge sectors of the Chilean masses which the UP has failed to mobilize. Only one third of the proletariat is organized in unions. Despite an improved distribution of income, the poorest 60 per cent of Chilean families receive only 28 per cent of the national income, while the richest 6 per cent receives 46 per cent.¹⁴ Over one-quarter of the population of Santiago lives in flimsy shacks without running water. There are more than enough popular forces to mobilize, once these disinherited and exploited groups are convinced that they are struggling for real social and political power and not just the replacement of a few Congressmen by a few others. An aggressive strategy on the part of the UP, strengthening existing mass organizations and creating potential new institutions of dual power, is the only way to capture those sectors of the petty bourgeoisie that can be rescued from the Right. Such an offensive would create severe internal stresses in the Armed Forces, and undoubtedly unleash more attempts at a *coup d'état*. But a vigilant and alerted working class could then exert such a political force of attraction on the rank-and-file of the Armed Forces that they would refuse to back officers who tried to foment a putsch.

The Position of the MIR

The second essential aspect of an offensive strategy would be an end to present inter-party sectarianism within the UP. Unfortunately such a prospect also seems remote. Concretely, it would be necessary to incorporate the MIR into the UP and defeat the present leadership of the CP. The question of the MIR is a key one for the future. The MIR has correctly criticized the UP over the course of the last two years, for bureaucracy, sectarianism, under-estimation of imperialism, over-reliance on the present government, and above all the failure to mobilize the whole working class in order to win real state power. It should be remembered, however, that the MIR is not as yet a vanguard party which represents an alternative to the UP for the masses. The MIR was a clandestine organization largely made up of students before the election of Allende. It had carried out numerous military actions, proposed armed struggle as the only form of revolutionary politics for Chile, and in general followed a strategy similar to that of the Tupamaros in Uruguay. The MIR did not expect the UP to win the 1970 elections, and when it did, remained outside the UP coalition while offering it critical support.

¹⁴ These figures are furnished in an interview with the then Sub-Secretary of Economy, Oscar Garretón, in *Chile Hoy* of 20-26 October 1972.

The MIR thereby became one of the few organizations of the Latin American insurrectionary left to try to organize a mass base in conditions of normal bourgeois democracy (other attempts have been made in Peru). In two years, the MIR has succeeded in winning popular support through hard organizing work, but this following is still very small, as indicated in the figures for the cur elections given above (see footnote 3). Its greatest successes have been among the marginal social strata, previously unorganized, such as the unemployed shack dwellers and the Mapuche Indian peasantry. It has been difficult for the MIR to gain a strong base among the organized working class, because within the proletariat itself it has had to compete with the traditional and powerful organizations of the CP and the SP. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the MIR has never claimed leadership of the Chilean revolution. Instead it has consistently presented itself as a group which could merge with the left of the UP in order to defeat the reformist politics of the CP. Such a merger and such a defeat are necessary, but at present they seem more remote than ever.

It is necessary to measure the MIR's strengths and prospects objectively. The MIR was not a working-class party prior to 1970, and even after hard organizational work its leadership remains composed of the same ex-students as before. These leaders and the movement as a whole retain a certain para-military attitude which has in some cases hindered day-to-day work among the masses. There is a genuine dilemma here, because para-military preparations are unquestionably necessary to meet the ever-present possibility that the MIR may be forced underground by a putsch or by an escalation of the CP's attacks on it. The MIR justifies its internal structure by appeals to Leninism and Bolshevism, but the Bolsheviks were a party which had far more solid roots in the working class than does the MIR. In any case, the fact remains that as of yet the MIR has been unable to attract large segments of the proletariat. The cur elections, although not a very reliable guide, indicate that the Christian Democrats have so far picked up more votes from anti-UP sentiment than has the MIR.

A comparison between Chile in 1972 and Russia in 1917 is often made by Chilean Marxists. To what extent is such a comparison justified? It is clear that there is real sense in which the UP corresponds to the Provisional Government of the February Revolution after the socialists had entered the Cabinet but before the Government had lost the support of the majority of the working class. The CP has many analogies with the Mensheviks, with their 'correct' Plekhanovite theory of stages. The heterogeneous SP can be likened to the Social Revolutionaries while the MIR might be compared to the Bolsheviks. European imperialism finds its parallel in American imperialism in Chile. The rightist October offensive in Chile would correspond to the retreat of the left during the July days in Russia. Bourgeois industrial sabotage by property owners was, of course, also practised in Russia.

The historical differences are more important than the parallels, however. The major difference lies in the position of the army, which in Russia was in a state of complete collapse because of its defeats in the First World War. A second major distinction is the mass support that

the Right enjoys in Chile, which was absent in Russia. A third major divergence is that the UP has made important economic advances and offered major benefits to the working class, whereas the Provisional Government was totally ineffective. Finally, a fourth fundamental difference is that in Chile the working class is not organized in anything like Soviets. The Co-ordinating Committees and the Peasant Councils could conceivably develop into institutions of dual power, but unfortunately have by no means done so yet. Another seemingly major difference is actually minor. Russia was an overwhelmingly peasant country, and Chile is not. But in Russia the struggle for power took place in the cities, principally Leningrad, which corresponds to the importance of Santiago in Chile. A more important divergence probably lies in the respective natures of the MTR and the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks were extremely weak just after the February Revolution but they were potentially very strong, and had two decades of organizing behind them. The working class in Russia quickly abandoned the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries when those parties could not fulfill the basic demands of the proletariat and peasantry. In Chile, the MTR's weakness is much deeper. It is a new party, which was formed in 1965 but which only assumed its present shape in 1967. The workers in the CP and SP have decades of party loyalty behind them, and will not easily break with a government which was initially successful in fulfilling a good part of its programme.

After the March Elections

Since the MTR is unable to offer a mass alternative to the UP, and the UP is unwilling to adopt any offensive strategy, what is in fact the likely scenario after the March elections? If this author's predictions are correct, the Congressional elections will not fundamentally change the present balance of forces. In other words, we can expect something like a continuation of the *status-quo* in the short run. On the other hand, there are groups on both the right and left which will certainly refuse to accept the current impasse. The most obviously restive force today is the National Party, the representative of oligarchic capital and the latifundist landowners. Unlike the Christian Democrats who are a more modern and mass-based bourgeois party, the National Party is not prepared to tolerate the present situation. Its fundamental interests have been too severely damaged by the UP and it does not want to wait until 1976 to recuperate them. Hitherto, the National Party has been the junior partner in the united front of the Right, but it has also recently registered large gains in the tense atmosphere of sharp class struggle. It is now waiting for the March elections to measure its strength against the Christian Democrats. In the likely event that the combined Right does not win a two-thirds majority in Congress, the National Party will once again urgently pressure the Armed Forces to carry out a swift *coup*. To forestall such a *coup* and maintain its leadership of the Right, the Christian Democrat Party would demand further concessions from the UP. Such concessions would probably include specific guarantees to halt expropriations, or even the entrance of some Christian Democrats into the Cabinet. A political deal of this sort might well involve outlawing the MTR. (The Right has already managed to pass an arms control law which provides a juridical basis for such a repression.) A major

retreat by the UP along these lines might then lead to the desertion of the left sector of the governmental coalition. The SP is famous for its division between Left and Right wings: concession by the Allende government to the Right after March could easily cause a split in the SP. In such an eventuality even the CP could be in danger of losing the support of its rank-and-file. With a weakened UP governing, with the tacit assistance of the Christian Democrats, large sections of the Chilean proletariat would soon become demoralized, while other workers would doubtless go over to extra-legal struggle.

These are sombre predictions for such a promising experiment as the UP, and it is to be hoped that they will not be fulfilled. There are many other alternatives. The historical process at present under way in Chile remains an extremely rich one, and will undoubtedly furnish many surprises. Despite all the mistakes and vacillations of the government itself the working class has on balance been greatly strengthened in the last two years. The UP experience may yet lead to a revolutionary assault on the state apparatus of capital and to the inauguration of a successful transition towards socialism.

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On Social Classes

What are social classes in Marxist theory? They are groups of social agents, of men defined *principally* but not exclusively by their place in the *production process*, i.e. by their place in the economic sphere. The economic place of the social agents has a *principal* role in determining social classes. But from that we cannot conclude that this economic place is sufficient to determine social classes. Marxism states that the economic does indeed have the determinant role in a mode of production or a social formation; but the political and the ideological (the superstructure) also have an important role. For whenever Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao analyse social classes, far from limiting themselves to the economic criteria alone, they make explicit reference to political and ideological criteria. We can thus say that a social class is defined by its *place* in the ensemble of social practices, i.e. by its place in the ensemble of the division of labour which includes political and ideological relations. This place corresponds to *the structural determination* of classes, i.e. the manner in which determination by the structure (relations of production, politico-ideological domination/subor-

dination) operates on class practices— for classes have existence only in the class struggle.¹ This takes the form of the effect of the structure on the social division of labour. But it should be pointed out here that the determination of classes, which has existence only in the class struggle must be clearly distinguished from *class position* in the *conjuncture*. In stressing the importance of political and ideological relations in the determination of classes and the fact that social classes have existence only in the class struggle, we should not be led into the 'voluntarist' error of reducing class determination to class position. From that error flow extremely important political consequences, which will be mentioned in the sections dealing with technicians, engineers and the labour aristocracy. Yet the economic criterion remains determinant. But how are we to understand the terms 'economic' and 'economic criterion' in the Marxist conception?

I Social Classes and Relations of Production

The 'economic' sphere is determined by *the production process* and the place of the agents, i.e. by their distribution into social classes by *the relations of production*: in the unit consisting of production/consumption division of the social product, it is production which has the determinant role. The distinction between the classes at this level is not, e.g. a distinction based on relative sizes of income (a distinction between 'rich' and 'poor'), as was believed by a long pre-Marxist tradition and as is still believed today by a whole series of sociologists. The undoubted distinction between relative levels of income is itself only a consequence of the relations of production.

What then are the production process and the relations of production which compose it? In the production process, we find first of all *the labour process*: it is that which in general designates man's relation to nature. But the labour process always appears in an historically determined social form. It exists only in its unity with relations of production. In a society divided into classes, the relations of production consist of a double relation which encompasses men's relations to nature in material production. These two relations are relations first between men and other men—class relations, and secondly between the agent of production and the object and means of labour—the productive forces. These two relations thus concern the relation of the non-worker (the owner) to the object and means of labour and the relation of the immediate producer (direct worker) to the object and means of labour. These relations involve two aspects: (a) Economic ownership: by this is meant the real economic control of the means of production, i.e. the power to assign the means of production to given uses and so to dispose of the products obtained. (b) Possession: by this is meant the capacity to put the means of production into operation.

¹ This text was originally produced at the request of the trade-union federation CFTD (*Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail*). It was circulated in mimeo form by the CFTD-BLAIAC Centre (document no. 9) for use by CFTD cadres. It is therefore an attempt at a brief presentation for working-class militants of elements of theoretical analysis applied to the present conjuncture. These elements are drawn from my two works, *Political Power and Social Classes* and *Fascism and Dictatorship*.

The Owners and the Means of Production

In every society divided into classes, the first relation (owners/means of production) always coincides with the first aspect: it is the owners who have real control of the means of production and thus exploit the direct workers by extorting surplus value from them in various forms. But this ownership is to be understood as real economic ownership, control of the means of production, to be distinguished from *juridical* ownership, which is sanctioned by the law and belongs to the super-structure. Certainly, the law generally ratifies economic ownership, but it is possible for the forms of juridical ownership not to coincide with real economic ownership.

We can illustrate this by two examples, beginning with the case of *the big farmers* in the division of classes in the countryside. According to Lenin, they belong to the rich peasantry, even though they do not have formal, juridical ownership of the land, which belongs to the rentier capitalist. These big farmers belong to the rich peasantry not because of their high incomes, but because they have real control of the land and the means of labour, of which they are thus the effective economic owners. I mention this case merely as an example. Space does not permit a detailed analysis of the class divisions of the peasantry, which does not in itself constitute a single class. It should, however, be pointed out that we can divide the countryside into big landowners, rich, medium and poor peasants, such that each class encompasses groups arising from different forms of ownership and exploitation, only if we make a rigorous distinction between formal, juridical ownership and real, economic ownership.

The case of the USSR and the 'socialist' countries is a second example. This is highly controversial, but it should not be omitted here. In these countries, formal, juridical ownership of the means of production belongs to the state, which is held to be 'the people's state'; but real control (economic ownership) certainly does not belong to the workers themselves—as we can see from the extinction of the Soviets and the workers' councils—but to the directors of enterprises and to the members of the party apparatus. It can therefore be argued that the form of collective juridical ownership conceals a new form of economic 'private' ownership; and hence that one should speak of a new 'bourgeoisie' in the USSR. In reality, the abolition of class exploitation cannot be equated simply with the abolition of juridical private ownership, but with the abolition of real economic ownership—i.e. control of the means of production by the workers themselves.

These considerations have a bearing on the question of the transition to socialism. By keeping in mind the all-important theoretical and real distinction between economic and formal, juridical, ownership, we can see that the mere *nationalization* of enterprises is not a solution. This is not only because nationalizations are adapted by the bourgeoisie to their own interests. It is because even when they are accompanied by a change in state power, a nationalization or a take-over of the economy by the state only changes the form of juridical ownership. In the last resort, the one thing which can fundamentally modify economic

ownership and thus lead to the abolition of classes is the control of production by the workers themselves.

The Exploited Class and the Means of Labour

Let us return to our second relation—that of the direct producers (the workers) to the means and object of labour. This relation defines *the exploited class*. It can take various forms, according to the various modes of production in which it occurs. In pre-capitalist modes of production, the direct producers (the workers) were not entirely separated from the object and means of labour. In the case of the feudal mode of production, for instance, even though the lord had both juridical and economic *ownership* of the land, the serf had *possession* of his parcel of land, which was protected by custom. He could not be purely and simply dispossessed by the lord. In that mode of production, exploitation was by *direct extraction of surplus labour*, in the form of *corvées* payable in labour or in kind. In other words, economic ownership and possession were distinct in that they did not both depend on the same relation between owners and means of production. By contrast, in the capitalist mode of production, the direct producers (the working class) are completely dispossessed of their means of work, of which the capitalists have the actual possession: Marx called this the phenomenon of the 'naked worker'. The worker possesses only his labour-power, which he sells as a *commodity*, and this fact determines the generalization of the commodity form. Thus the capitalist extracts surplus labour not in a direct way, but rather through the medium of labour embodied in the commodity—by amassing *surplus value*.

Important consequences follow from this. The *production process* is defined not by technological factors, but by relations between men and the means of production; it is defined therefore by the unity of the labour process and the relations of production. In societies divided into classes, there is no such thing as 'productive labour' as such, understood as a neutral term. In every mode of production divided into classes, productive labour is labour corresponding to the relations of production of that mode: it is that labour which gives rise to a specific form of *exploitation*. In such societies, production always stands for division, exploitation and struggle between classes. Thus in the capitalist mode of production, productive labour is that which (always on the basis of use-value) produces exchange value in the form *commodities*, and so *surplus value*. It is precisely in this way that the *working class* is economically defined in the capitalist mode of production: productive labour relates directly to the division between classes in the relations of production.

Productive and Unproductive Labour

This formulation allows us to solve certain problems, while it also poses new ones. The working class is not defined by its *wages*, since wages are a juridical form in which the product is divided up according to the contract governing the buying and selling of labour-power. While every worker is a wage earner, not every wage earner is a worker, since not every wage earner is necessarily a productive worker,

i.e. one who produces surplus value (commodities). Marx provides some explicit analyses on this point: he considers, for example, that transport workers (railwaymen, etc) are productive workers, belonging to the working class. This is because a commodity does not exist until it appears on the market: and in the definition of productive labour, the important factor is the commodity (surplus value); whereas wage earners in commerce, banks, advertising agencies, service industries, etc, are not included among productive workers. This is because some of them belong to the sphere of circulation, while the rest do not produce surplus value, but merely contribute to its realization.

The problem is yet more complicated with respect to the technicians and engineers working within and on the periphery of material production in enterprises: a group which includes those who are often (incorrectly) called 'bearers of science'. There is no coherent or explicit account of this problem to be found in Marx, who, in confining himself to the economic plane, in fact produces two more or less contradictory responses. In *Theories of Surplus Value* and the *Grundrisse*, Marx uses the notion of *collective worker*. In view of (a) the progressive socialization of the productive forces and the labour process, and (b) the increasing interpenetration of the various tasks contributing to commodity production, Marx argues that science tends to become part of the productive forces and that technicians, through the medium of the collective worker, should be considered part of the working class. This leads to the notion that they form a labour aristocracy—which Lenin considered to be a stratum of the working class itself. But in *Capital* Marx clearly considers that this category of agents is not part of the working class, since science is not a direct productive force, as only its applications enter into the production process. Moreover these applications contribute only to the increase and realization of surplus-value, not to its direct production. So technical agents do not form part of the working class.

What is the significance of this? We must first point out the limitations of certain 'economic' criteria (understood in a 'technicist' manner) which cannot provide an answer. First there is a division between 'manual' and 'intellectual' labour, understood in a technicist manner, i.e. as a division dependent on the technical division of labour. Now even at the level of the production process alone that division is not in itself a sufficient condition for the division into classes. The productive worker, producing surplus value, is not in any way reducible to the manual worker alone. On the other hand, we can see how important this division between manual and intellectual labour is when we consider how it characterizes the ensemble of places in the social division of labour, determining social classes, where authority and direction of labour are linked in the enterprise to intellectual labour and the 'secret of knowledge'. The division between manual and intellectual labour becomes important in the determination of classes only when it is situated within political and ideological relations.

Secondly, there is the distinction between the collective worker and the productive worker, as claimed in the French Communist Party's recent publication *Traité d'Economie Marxiste: le Capitalisme monopoliste*.²

² *Traité d'Economie Marxiste: le Capitalisme Monopoliste*, Paris, 1972, 2 vols.

This work is based almost exclusively on technico-economic criteria. The problem is of such importance that it is worth dwelling on it. In Vol. I, p. 211 ff., the authors attempt to define '*collective worker*' as 'those who contribute "technically" to the production of surplus-value, as distinct from the stricter notion of "productive worker", defined as those who directly produce surplus-value (the working class)'. These notions embody a whole series of bastard categories, of agents who are considered not to be workers, but yet to be part of the 'collective worker', i.e. 'quasi-workers'.

These notions constitute an *economistic deformation*, harnessed to a specific political objective. It is an *economistic deformation*, in that when Marx uses the notion of *collective worker*, he in fact identifies it with an extension of the working class itself, of the productive worker. He never makes any distinction between collective worker and productive worker; instead he uses the term 'collective worker' to designate transformations of the working class itself. On the other hand, it is true that in *Capital* Marx uses only economic criteria to define the collective worker, and it is for that reason that the term remains fluid and ambiguous in that work.

We should put forward the following proposition: the collective worker is none other than the working class, though the term 'collective worker' has different connotations in that it introduces ideological and political criteria into the delimitation of the working class. This is its fundamental significance, to which we shall return later. The erroneous view which distinguishes between the collective worker and the working class by inventing strata 'quasi-workers' all but adopts the myth of the 'wage-earning class', the myth which identifies *wage-earner* and *working class*.

From this issue, we can move to an important problem. We stated above that the production process consists of the *unity* between the labour process and the relations of production. We can now put forward an additional proposition: within this unity it is not the labour process (including 'technology' and the 'technical process') which has the dominant role: *rather it is the relations of production which have primacy over the labour process and the 'productive forces'*. This has an important bearing on the question of social classes. The determination of classes depends on the relations of production, which relate directly to the social division of labour and the politico-ideological superstructure, not to the data of any 'technical process' as such. *The technical division of labour is dominated by the social division*. So we do not define productive labour as consisting of those who take part in production understood in a technical sense, but as consisting of those who produce surplus-value and who are thus exploited as a class in a determinate manner, i.e. those who occupy a determinate place in the social division of labour.

II Mode of Production and Social Formation

Before we go on to the political and ideological criteria necessary for delimiting social classes, we should pause to consider the classes in a concrete mode of production and social formation or 'society'. In talk-

ing of a *mode of production* or of a form of production, we are placing ourselves at a general and abstract level, e.g. the slave, feudal and capitalist modes of production. We are, as it were, 'isolating' these modes and forms of production in social reality, in order to examine them theoretically. But as Lenin demonstrated in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, a concrete society at a given moment of time (a *social formation*) is composed of several modes and forms of production which coexist in it in combination. For example, capitalist societies at the start of the 20th century were composed of (i) elements of the feudal mode of production, (ii) the form of simple commodity production and manufacture (the form of the transition from feudalism to capitalism) and (iii) the capitalist mode of production in its competitive and monopoly forms. Yet these societies were certainly capitalist societies: this means that the capitalist mode of production was *dominant* in them. In fact, in every social order, we find the dominance of one mode of production, which produces complex effects of *dissolution* or *conservation* on the other modes of production and which gives these societies their character (feudal, capitalist, etc). The one exception is the case of societies in transition, which are, on the contrary, characterized by an *equilibrium* between the various modes of production.

To return to social classes: if we confine ourselves to modes of production alone, examining them in a pure and abstract fashion, we find that each of them involves two classes—the exploiting class, which is politically and ideologically dominant, and the exploited class, which is politically and ideologically dominated: masters and slaves in the slave mode of production, lords and serfs in the feudal mode of production, bourgeois and workers in the capitalist mode of production. But a concrete society (a social formation) *involves more than two classes*, in so far as it is composed of various modes and forms of production. No social formation involves only two classes: but the two fundamental classes of any social formation are those of the dominant mode of production in that formation. Thus in contemporary France, for example, the two fundamental classes are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But we also find there the traditional petty bourgeoisie (craftsmen, small traders), dependent on the form of simple commodity production, the 'new' petty bourgeoisie composed of non-productive wage earners, dependent on the monopoly form of capitalism and several social classes in the countryside, where vestiges of feudalism are still to be found in a transformed state (e.g. forms of share-cropping).

These considerations have an important bearing on the question of *alliances* between the working class and the other popular classes. The petty bourgeoisie and the popular classes in the countryside (agricultural labourers, poor peasants, middle peasants) are in fact *classes* which differ from the working class. Now in so far as the two fundamental classes are the bourgeoisie and the working class, it is true that in the course of their expanded reproduction the other classes *tend to polarize* around the working class. But this does not mean that as classes they dissolve into an undifferentiated mass: they are still *classes* with their own specific interests. In other words, the concepts of 'class' and 'people' are not coextensive: *according to the conjuncture*, a class may or may not form part of the 'people', without this affecting its class nature.

It is here that the problem of alliances arises. On the one hand, the working class must accept responsibility in its alliances for the *specific interests of the classes* which make up the 'people' or the 'popular masses' along with it, as for instance in the worker-peasant alliance advocated by Lenin. On the other hand, it must not lose sight of the fact that—as in every alliance—contradictions do exist between the specific interests of the working class, *quasi* class, and, the other popular classes. By recognizing these facts, we provide ourselves with the means of giving a just solution to the contradictions 'among the people'.

This is important since there are two other interpretations of the phenomenon, both equally mistaken. According to the first interpretation, upheld by many sociologists, the transformations which capitalist societies are currently undergoing are supposed to have given rise to a vast 'intermediate class' which comprises all social groups except the bourgeoisie and proletariat and which, by virtue of its numerical weight, provides the real pillar upholding modern societies. As has been noted, we are here faced with several classes: there is no justification at present for claiming that these intermediate classes are fused into a single class.

The second mistaken interpretation is currently set out in the Communist Party's recent *Manuel d'Economie Marxiste*, mentioned above (Vol. I, pp. 204 ff). According to this interpretation, under 'monopoly state capitalism', a polarization is now taking place which is *effective*: *dissolving all the other classes of society except the bourgeoisie and the proletariat*: the other social classes (the peasantry, the various fractions of the petty bourgeoisie) no longer have any existence as classes, but only as *intermediate strata*. This deserves to be stressed, since it is the first time that such a gross misinterpretation has been explicitly formulated in an authorized manner. It should moreover be related to the interpretation of the concept of 'collective worker': according to this, there exist on the one hand the working class (productive worker) and on the other hand 'quasi-workers' (collective worker) with more or less identical interests to those of the working class; and in addition, various intermediate *strata* which, lacking any specific class interests, are automatically grouped around the working class. This interpretation obviously opens the way to an *unprincipled alliance*, which can have dangerous consequences. Those who begin by denying that there are any differences between the members of the popular alliance end up (once contradictions emerge which they have made no attempt to resolve—e.g. those between the proletariat and peasantry in the USSR under Stalin) by repressing these contradictions with police action: they simply proclaim that the real interest of the other members of the alliance is automatically identical, at any moment of time, with that of the working class.

III Political and Ideological Criteria

It is now time to develop the other side of the thesis, outlined in the introduction, that purely economic criteria are not sufficient to determine and locate social classes. This becomes particularly obvious when we consider a concrete social formation. Here it becomes absolute'

necessary to refer to positions within the ideological and political relations of the social division of labour; and this becomes even clearer when we examine the question of the *reproduction* of social classes.

We shall begin with those problems which relate to definitions of the working class. In the course of this investigation, we shall attempt to solve the problem, indicated above, of the technicians and engineers. While economic criteria alone are sufficient to exclude wage-earners in commerce, banks, etc, from the working class, they provide us with no answer to our question concerning the technicians and engineers. For that, we have to refer to the social division of labour as a whole. When we do this, we see that the ensemble of technicians and engineers occupies a *contradictory* position: from the economico-technical point of view it increasingly contributes to the production of surplus-value; but at the same time it is entrusted with a special authority in overseeing the labour process and its despotic organization. It is thus placed, 'alongside' (see above) intellectual labour in its maintenance of the monopoly of knowledge. It can be suggested that, up to now at least, this latter aspect of its situation outweighs the former in determining its class: so that as a *whole*, engineers and technicians cannot be considered as belonging to the working class.

In thus referring to ideological-political criteria, we are still talking of the *structural determination* of the technician class, i.e. their *place* in political and ideological relations. This place is not reducible to their *class position* in the conjuncture. Because of their contradictory class determination, they may, in strikes for example, sometimes take the side of the employers and sometimes that of the workers. If in referring to ideologico-political criteria, we were merely alluding to class position, we should have to say that this ensemble is part of the working class whenever it takes the working-class's side, and that it is not part of it whenever it takes the opposing side. But this would undermine the *objective* definition of classes made by Marxism. The point to remember is that even when engineers and technicians take the working class's side, they are not workers: and this has an important bearing on a correct policy of alliances.

Distinguishing Strata: the Problem of the Labour Aristocracy

It is also necessary to refer to political and ideological criteria in differentiating the various *strata* in the working class itself. Many authors, especially A. Touraine, have tried to reduce the ideologico-political differences within the working class to technico-economic differences in the organization of labour, or even to differences in the size of wages. These are differences which are directly classifiable—manual labourers, semi-skilled labourers, skilled (qualified) labourers, etc. The basic criterion is that of 'skills' conceived in a 'technicist' fashion. These differentiations can be used as the basis of contradictory generalizations: either to maintain that unskilled labourers, etc, have a higher class consciousness and revolutionary potential than the rest of the working class, or to attribute the same thing to skilled workers. But current inquiries, historical experience and sociological analyses show that these generalizations based on purely technico-

economic criteria are arbitrary. Differentiations within the working class do not purely and simply *coincide* with positions in the organization of labour. They depend rather on political and ideological criteria, on forms of struggle and of combative organization and on tradition; and these criteria have their *own autonomy*. To take just the example of anarcho-syndicalism in France: how, on simple 'technico-economic' criteria, can we explain an ideological form which took root *par excellence* both amongst unskilled labourers in big enterprises and amongst skilled workers in small manufacturing plants?

A further example is that of the famous *labour aristocracy*. This, according to Lenin, is *a stratum of the working class which is the basis of social democracy*. According to the 'economistic' version of the conception (advocated notably by the Third International), this stratum consists of *the most skilled and best paid workers* in the imperialist countries, receiving the crumbs of surplus profits drawn from the colonies, crumbs distributed to them by the imperialist bourgeoisies: it is these workers who form the basis of reformism and social democracy. The first difficulty is, of course, the fact that the interpenetration and fusion of capitals at the stage of imperialism make it virtually impossible rigorously to distinguish those parts of the working class paid by imperialist surplus profits and those paid by domestic capital. But quite apart from that, the economistic version seems to be disproved by rigorous historical and sociological studies of the class basis of those who supported and voted for the communist and socialist parties (mainly between the wars) in various capitalist countries. Their most important finding is that the two groups consisting of (a) the best paid and most skilled workers and (b) the unskilled labourers and poor workers were divided *roughly equally* between the communist party and communist trade unions and the socialist party and socialist trade unions. If there are national variations, they are far from conclusive. This does not mean that the notion of a labour aristocracy is false, only that in defining it we must refer to positions in the ensemble of the social division of labour: positions relating to the division between manual and intellectual labour reproduced in the very heart of the working class. It may well be applicable to certain agents within 'bureaucratic trade-union organizations devoted to class collaboration.

The last problem in this context is that of *wage differentials* within the working class. While it is true that common class interest and effective class solidarity are dominant within the proletariat, mainly grouped around class organizations, it still remains true that wage differential present a real problem. They do not, in fact, correspond to simple economic data. Marx defines *wages* as a juridical form of division of the social product, and so political elements intervene in determining the form. Considered as an ensemble in a society, from the viewpoint of abstract analysis, wages correspond to the costs of reproducing labour-power. But labour-power is here being considered in a 'general' 'abstract' fashion. It does not follow from such an analysis that ever *concrete* wage differential within the working class corresponds to 'technical' necessities, i.e. to the fact that the labour-power of a group of relatively better paid workers necessarily costs more (or as much more as the wage differential) than that of a group of lower paid workers.

In fact, all historical and economic analyses tend to show that wage differentials coincide to an important extent with political data—the most important being *the bourgeoisie's policy of maintaining the division of the working class*. This does not, of course, mean that the bourgeoisie must effectively *succeed* in its policy of creating political differences within the working class, and that 'better paid' workers should be considered suspect. But it does demonstrate the futility of a trade-union policy of defending the wage hierarchy at all costs, on the pretext that wage differentials are simple economic necessities dependent purely and simply on the costs of reproducing labour-power. Indeed, a certain policy of defending the wage hierarchy at all costs is only one step away from the myth of the 'wage-earning class'.

Two Kinds of Petty Bourgeoisie

The need to refer to political and ideological criteria in defining classes is particularly clear when we deal with the *petty bourgeoisie*, or the question of whether there is such a thing as a petty bourgeois *class*, and what ensembles of agents are part of it. In general it is thought that two large groups of agents with quite different positions in production are part of the petty bourgeoisie. The first is the 'traditional' petty bourgeoisie, which is tending to decline in size: these are the small-scale producers and small traders (small property). They include forms of artisanal work and small family businesses in which one and the same agent is both owner of the means of production and of labour and is the direct worker. Here there is no economic exploitation in the strict sense, inasmuch as these forms do not employ paid workers (or only very rarely do so). Labour is principally provided by the real owner or the members of his family, who are not remunerated in the form of wages. Small-scale producers derive profit from the sale of their goods and from participating in the total redistribution of surplus value, but they do not extort surplus value directly. Secondly there is the 'new' petty bourgeoisie, which tends to increase under monopoly capitalism. It consists of the *non-productive wage-earning workers* mentioned above; we should add to it civil servants employed by the state and its various apparatuses. These workers do not produce surplus value. Like others, they sell their labour-power and their wage is determined by the price of reproducing their labour-power, but they are exploited by the direct extortion of surplus labour, not by the production of surplus value.

Now these two large groups occupy different and utterly dissimilar positions in production. Can they then be considered to constitute a *class*, the petty bourgeoisie? To this there are two possible replies. The first admits the intervention of political and ideological criteria. It can be held that these different positions in production and the economic sphere do, in fact, have *the same effects* at the political and ideological level. Both small holders and those wage earners who live out their exploitation in the form of 'wages' and 'competition' far removed from production present the same political and ideological characteristics for different economic reasons: petty bourgeois individualism; attraction to the *status quo* and fear of revolution; the myth of 'social advancement' and aspirations to bourgeois status; belief in the 'neutral State'

above classes; political instability and a tendency to support 'strong States' and bonapartist regimes; revolts taking the form of 'petty bourgeois' jacqueries. If this is correct, then these *common* ideologico-political characteristics provide sufficient ground for considering that these two ensembles with different places in the economy constitute a relatively unified class, the petty bourgeoisie.

Yet even in this case, nothing prevents us from distinguishing between *fractions of one and the same class*. As we shall see later in the case of the bourgeoisie, Marxism establishes distinctions *between fractions* of a class. Fractions are distinct from simple strata since they coincide with important economic differentiations and, as such, can even take on an important role as social forces, a role relatively distinct from that of the other fractions of their class. It might thus be possible to establish that the petty bourgeois fraction of non-productive wage earners is closer to the working class than the fraction comprising the traditional petty bourgeoisie. In talking of fractions, it should also be possible to introduce the element of *the conjuncture*: to establish that one or other of the fractions is nearer or further from the working class according to the conjuncture. (See especially the currently important process of the proletarianization of artisanal production.) It should also be possible to introduce differentiations between *strata* of the petty bourgeoisie, with particular reference to ideologico-political divergences over and beyond the ideologico-political position basically common to the petty bourgeoisie as a whole: these divergences depend on the particular situation of the various petty bourgeois ensembles, particularly with respect to their *reproduction*. But it should not be forgotten that we are still basically concerned with a single class and that our attitude towards these fractions and strata, whether we are discussing alliances with them or predicting their political behaviour (especially their instability), should be framed accordingly. This position seems to be the more correct.

A second position has two versions: (a) The term 'petty bourgeoisie' can be reserved for the traditional petty bourgeoisie and the non-productive wage earners be described as a new social class. But this poses difficult problems in theory and practice. Unless we consider that the capitalist mode of production has been superseded and that we are now in some kind of 'post-industrial' or 'technocratic' society which produces this new class, how can we maintain that capitalism itself produces a *new class* in the course of its development? This thesis is possible for the ideologists of the 'managerial class' and the 'techno-structure', but it is unthinkable for Marxist theory. (b) Following the Communist Party, the non-productive wage earners can be assigned not to the petty bourgeoisie but to the 'intermediate strata'. We have already considered one reason why this view is false. Another is that while Marxism uses the terms *strata, fractions and categories* to designate particular ensembles, it yet remains true that these strata, fractions and categories *always belong to a class*. The labour aristocracy is certainly specific stratum, but a stratum of the working class. The 'intellectual' or the 'bureaucracy' are, as we shall see, certainly particular *social categories*, but *they belong to the bourgeois or petty bourgeois class*. This is one of the features which distinguishes Marxism from various American

conceptions of social stratification. By defining social groups in an entirely fanciful fashion, these conceptions dilute and eliminate social classes. Marxism on the other hand introduces differentiations in a rigorous fashion *within class divisions*. Fractions, strata and categories are not 'outside' or 'alongside' social classes: they form part of them.

Comprador Bourgeoisie and National Bourgeoisie

Reference to political and ideological criteria is also important in defining fractions of *the bourgeoisie*. Some of its fractions are to be located already at the economic level of the constitution and reproduction of capital: industrial, commercial and financial capital, big and medium capital at the stage of monopoly capitalism (imperialism). But precisely at the imperialist stage, a distinction arises which is not to be located at the economic level alone—the distinction between the '*comprador*' bourgeoisie and the *national bourgeoisie*. The comprador bourgeoisie is that fraction of the class whose interests are constitutively linked to foreign imperialist capital (capital belonging to the principal foreign imperialist power) and which is thus completely bound politically and ideologically to foreign capital. The national bourgeoisie is that fraction of the bourgeoisie whose interests are linked to the nation's economic development and which comes into relative contradiction with the interests of big foreign capital. Although this distinction only holds for certain colonial countries, it is an important one: according to the steps of the process, it is possible to envisage forms of alliance between the working class and the national bourgeoisie against foreign imperialism and for national independence, as in the case of China.

The distinction between comprador bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie does not entirely coincide with economic position. Because of the marked interpenetration of capitals under imperialism, the distinction between capitals tied to foreign imperialism and national capitals becomes extremely vague and questionable. Moreover, the distinction does not coincide with that between big and medium capital: it is possible for big national monopolies to exist whose interests are in relative contradiction with those of foreign monopolies, just as it is possible for medium enterprises to exist which are bound by a series of sub-contracts to foreign imperialism. But with respect to developed capitalist countries, in the present phase when social relations are becoming *world-wide*, it hardly seems possible to talk of a national bourgeoisie, i.e. one which is in practice opposed to American imperialism. This is due to the increasing *internationalization* of capital, to the massive dominance of American capital, to the political and economic decadence of the bourgeois class and to the increasing tendency towards an *asymmetrical* relation of *dependence* between the old centres of imperialism (notably in Europe) and the USA: this does not mean that we cannot talk of an *internal bourgeoisie* in these countries. In particular, it is extremely doubtful whether the Gaullist policy of national independence (anyway more imaginary than real) corresponded to any kind of French 'national bourgeoisie'. What was really at stake was a divergence (purely dependent on the conjuncture) between American and French capitals, an internal problem of decolonization and neo-colonization, and a plebiscitary politics in search of mass support.

IV Social Categories

In addition to class fractions and strata, Marxism asserts that there are *social categories*. The feature which distinguishes social categories from fractions and strata is the following: while political and ideological criteria can intervene in a more or less important fashion in determining fractions and strata, in the determination of social categories they have the *dominant role*. So the term social category designates an ensemble of agents whose principal role is its functioning in *the state apparatuses and in ideology*. This is the case, for example, with the administrative *bureaucracy* which is composed in part of groups of state functionaries (civil servants). The same is true of the group designated by the common term *intellectuals*, whose principal role is the inculcation of ideology. But it is necessary to repeat a remark made above: *social categories themselves belong to classes*: they are not groups 'outside' or 'alongside' classes, any more than they are, as categories, social classes themselves. Social categories do not, in fact, belong to one single class: their members generally belong to various social classes. Thus, in their way of life, political role, etc, the senior personnel, the top of the administrative bureaucracy, generally belong to the bourgeoisie, while the intermediate and lower echelons may belong either to the bourgeoisie or to the petty bourgeoisie. These social categories belong to classes and do not in themselves constitute classes: they have no specific role of their own in production. This must be pointed out, since many sociologists and 'political scientists' have claimed that social categories are effective classes: as in the case of the bureaucracy, which has often been considered to be a class.

It should be noted that although Trotsky himself attributed to the Soviet bureaucracy an important role in the explanation of the USSR's development, he never considered that the bureaucracy could constitute a class. But many contemporary sociologists do hold that the intellectuals constitute a distinct class; this view is generally based on fanciful ideas concerning the role of science as a productive force and the intellectuals as bearers of science. The ideological function of these conceptions is clear: they are invariably combined either with the denial of the role of the class struggle (bourgeoisie/proletariat) as the principal motor of the historical process (in the case of the conception of the bureaucracy as a class) or with the denial of the working-class' fundamental role as vanguard (in the case of the conception of the intellectuals as a class, the latter take over the role of vanguard).

Conjunctural Unity and Class Alliances

If social categories are not classes but themselves belong to a class, what is the point in trying to identify them? The reason is that social categories may, because of their relation to the state apparatuses and ideology, present a *unity of their own*, despite the fact that they belong to various classes; and what is more, in their political functioning, they can present a relative autonomy *vis-à-vis* the classes to which their members belong. Thus, in the case of the administrative bureaucracy the internal hierarchy of delegated authority characteristic of the state apparatuses, the particular status attributed to functionaries, the

specific internal ideology circulating within the state apparatuses (the 'neutral state' as an arbitrator above classes, 'service to the nation', 'general interest', etc) allow the bureaucracy to present a unity of its own in certain conjunctures, welding together the ensemble consisting of members of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. In this way, the bureaucracy as a whole can serve class interests different from the interests of the classes to which its members belong, according to relations of state power. For example, Marx stressed that in England the 'top' of the bureaucracy belonged to the *aristocracy*, while the ensemble of the bureaucracy served the interests of the bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeois members of the bureaucracy can frequently serve 'state' interests which are contrary to their own interests. The result of all this, as Lenin recognized, is that these social categories can at times function as effective *social forces*; i.e. they have an *important* political role *of their own* in a given conjuncture. This role is not reducible to the fact of being 'in tow' behind the social classes to which their members belong or even behind the fundamental social forces, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The political behaviour of the ensemble of the bureaucracy under bonapartism and fascism exemplifies this.

This analysis is important because it has two consequences bearing on the question of the working class's alliances. In its indispensable alliance with the 'intellectuals' and the intermediate and subordinate strata of the civil service, the working class must relate to them in a specific fashion. They often have particular interests which cannot be reduced to—for example—the general interests of the petty bourgeoisie to which they belong. For example: guarantees of freedom of intellectual, scientific and artistic production, of freedom of expression, of circulation of information are important to the intellectuals. But on the other hand, we must never lose sight of the relation between social categories and social classes. For social categories belong to social classes; and despite their internal unity, the *breaks and contradictions* which show themselves within social categories often coincide with the different class membership of their various members. In the administrative apparatus, these breaks take the form of contradictions between upper echelons (bourgeois) and lower echelons (petty bourgeois). In the case of the intellectuals, the breaks are sometimes due to the different ideologies fashioned and transmitted by them, as for instance the sharp contradictions which have recently appeared within the French teaching profession.

We must also remember that during these alliances, the members of the state apparatus or intellectuals swinging over to the working-class's side still remain petty bourgeois, considered both overall and from the point of view of their *class membership* (as opposed to their *class origin*). This should certainly not lead to sectarianism: there are frequent cases of intellectuals who side politically and ideologically with the working class, are active militants in its class organizations and for whom the criterion of class membership becomes blurred and even disappears. But this is a different problem and relates to the question of the working-class's organization. The fact remains that in the alliance with the intellectuals, they are, considered overall, still petty bourgeois. They often show the fundamental characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie:

political instability and leftist extremism coupled with rightist opportunism, etc.

There are therefore two equally false and dangerous extremes against which we must guard, in dealing with the question of social categories. *Overestimating* the importance of their class membership is the first: this leads to pronouncing a once-and-for-all sentence on an intellectual as a 'son of a bourgeois or petty bourgeois', whilst neglecting the importance of his practical conduct and his political and ideological choices. The second is *underestimating* the importance of their class membership: treating them as homogeneous units alongside and outside classes. It is possible simultaneously to adopt both these false courses, as do the positions currently adopted by the Communist Party and the CGT and the direction now being taken by SNESUP.³ Overestimating the importance of the 'intellectual' class membership leads to slogans like 'students/sons of bourgeois/leftists = Marcellin'.⁴

Despite verbal caveats, social categories are here treated as unified entities, alongside and outside classes: the class divisions which appear within them are neglected. Thus appeals are made to 'the state administrative corps as a whole, from the technocratic heights to the subordinate echelons. It is as if this was a unified social category apart from the direct representatives of big capital (Pompidou = banker)—even though the upper personnel's 'technocratic ideology' is alluded to, while their bourgeois class membership is glossed over. This position is even clearer so far as the 'teaching body' is concerned: it is held to be an irreducible unity which represents all teachers from full professors to assistants with short-term contracts and which, bearing the general label 'intellectuals', is thought to have the same claim as others to be a possible ally of the working class.

The Class Character of Intellectuals

Social categories are also included in the notorious *intermediate strata*, which have already been discussed. As one of the intermediate strata, the category of intellectuals is considered to be alongside and outside classes. The problem raised by their class membership is conjured away and the policy adopted towards them is no more than a demagogic appeal to a broad and indiscriminate alliance between the working class and the intellectuals: this is despite the fact that the term 'petty bourgeois' is automatically applied to any intellectual siding with the working class who diverges in the slightest from the CP leadership. This is meant to be an irrefutable demonstration of the source of such divergences.

That being said, the question of the alliance between the working class and the intellectuals is now arising in a particularly sharp form in advanced capitalist societies. This has happened partly because of the considerable enlargement of the category of intellectuals (in the broad sense of the term), but above all, because of the *ideological crisis* preceding

³ Trade union of teachers in higher education [Trans.].

⁴ Gaullist Minister of the Interior [Trans.].

or accompanying the political crisis of contemporary imperialism. More and more intellectuals are breaking free from the grip of bourgeois ideology and are thus capable of being enlisted to the working class's cause. The traditional form of proletarian/intellectual alliance, based exclusively on the intellectuals' class membership and reducible to a working-class/petty bourgeoisie alliance disregarding the intellectuals' status as a social category, is now probably inadequate for the solution of the problem.

Different solutions have been proposed, from Garaudy's conception of an historical bloc (going back to Gramsci's analyses) to the theses recently published by the Italian *Manifesto* group. These solutions have points in common and present a series of common problems. In general, the alliance between the working class and the intellectuals (in the broad sense) is considered by them to take priority over the traditional alliance between the working class and the poor and medium peasantry (but this goes equally for the CP's current position). Certainly, the two objectives do not exclude each other, but this position represents a kind of readaptation of the Third International's old schema: first, a workers' front (within the working class) and then, based on it, a popular front (alliance between the working class and the other classes). But in this case, the alliance constituting the basic bloc is that between the workers and the intellectuals; and it is on that basis that the alliance between the bloc and the peasants is built. This is a questionable position, even if we take into account the exodus from the countryside and the peasantry's drop in numbers. It also helps to propagate a series of ideologies of intellectuals as quasi-workers (science = a productive force). It should be noted by the way that in Gramsci's conception of the 'historical bloc', the fundamental relation was that between workers and peasants. A second problem is that the importance of the term 'historical bloc' (uniting workers and peasants) is that it is distinct from a simple alliance. While 'alliance' implies that the members, with their specific interests and their own organizations, are distinct and autonomous, 'historical bloc' means that the members have interests which are in the long term identical and that they are bound by an organic link. There is nothing, however, to prove that the intellectual petty bourgeoisie is now seeing its own interests dissolving into those of the working class, despite the fact that it is increasingly capable of taking its stand alongside the working class. Although this solution is intended to overcome the distinction between workers and intellectuals as reproduced within political organizations, it remains an entirely verbal one. The real debate concerning the forms of working-class organization remains open.

V The Dominant Classes

It is essential to analyse the dominant classes, in particular the bourgeoisie. The important problem here concerns the division of the bourgeoisie into industrial, commercial and financial fractions. Under monopoly capitalism, the division into big and medium capital is superimposed on the former division without entirely abolishing it. In talking of the bourgeoisie as the dominant class, it must not be forgotten that we are really dealing with an alliance between several dominant

fractions of the bourgeoisie sharing in political domination. Moreover, at the start of capitalism, this power alliance, which may be called the power bloc, often encompassed several other classes, notably the landed aristocracy. This alliance between several classes and fractions *which are all dominant* can only function regularly under the *leadership* of one of those classes and fractions. This is the *hegemonic fraction* which unifies the power alliance under its leadership. The hegemonic fraction is the one which guarantees the general interest of the alliance and whose specific interests are particularly guaranteed by the state.

While the dominant fractions' internal contradictions and their internal struggle to occupy the hegemonic place have a secondary role *vis-à-vis* the principal contradiction (bourgeois/proletariat), their role is still important. In fact, as Marx observed in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, the various forms of state and forms of regime are marked by the changes in hegemony between the various bourgeois fractions. Still less can *economic domination* and *political hegemony* be identified in a necessary and mechanical fashion. It is possible for a fraction of the bourgeoisie to have the dominant role in the economy without thereby having political hegemony. An important instance of this was the lengthy economic domination of big monopoly capital while political hegemony belonged to one or other fraction of medium capital. We can see the importance of these remarks for an examination, for example, of Gaullism. The important point to stress is that the power alliance between dominant classes and fractions under the leadership of a hegemonic fraction (to whose interests the state apparatus in particular corresponds) is *always a function of the form of bourgeois domination*. In particular, when we speak of the hegemonic fraction, we must remember that it is not the only dominant force, but simply the hegemonic force in an ensemble of fractions which are all equally dominant. For example when Marx said that under Louis Bonaparte the industrial bourgeoisie was the economic fraction, he never meant that the other fractions of the bourgeoisie were excluded from political domination. The same also holds in particular for the relation between big and medium capital in contemporary capitalist countries. In them, big capital is the hegemonic fraction, but this does not mean that medium capital is excluded from political power: as a dominant fraction it shares in political power under the hegemony of big capital. The contradictions between big and medium capital are simply the contemporary form of the contradiction between dominant bourgeois fractions.

Certain contemporary analyses of 'state monopoly capitalism' and the 'anti-monopoly alliance' make it necessary to emphasize this point. These analyses are nearly always restricted to the hegemonic fraction: big capital, and fail to mention the other dominant bourgeois fractions. The failure to distinguish between the hegemonic fraction and the dominant fractions has led to the following result: it is held that big capital alone occupies the place of political domination, from which the other bourgeois fractions are henceforth excluded. The question is of importance because of the political consequences which can be seen to flow from it: namely, advocacy of a broad 'anti-monopoly alliance' 'liberal bourgeoisie', 'sincere democrats', etc, for the occasion, in order to expel the 'zoo families' (considered to be the dominant fraction) from

power. The working-class's strategic alliances (an entirely different thing from tactical compromises) are thereby extended as far as dominant bourgeois fractions—medium capital. This, broadly speaking, is the path of 'advanced democracy' advocated by the western CP's.

Certainly, things are not presented in quite such a crude fashion, but they are still clear enough in the *Manuel d'Economie Marxiste*, mentioned above. In this, whenever political domination is discussed, only the big monopolies are mentioned. In contrast, whenever capital other than big capital is discussed, it is always small capital with which an alliance is expressly sought. But we must establish agreement on terms. If by small capital we mean the *petty bourgeoisie* of crafts, manufacture and commerce, it is correct to seek an alliance with it since the petty bourgeoisie *does not belong to the bourgeoisie as such*, i.e. to the fractions of the bourgeoisie. But, in fact, the term small capital is here used for quite another purpose. In speaking only of big monopolies and small capital (i.e. conjuring away medium capital), it is implied that everything which does not belong to the big monopolies (the one dominant fraction) is automatically part of small capital and is capable of allying with the working class: medium capital being thus included in small capital. On the rare occasions when the *Manuel* talks of medium capital (Vol. I, p. 223), it explicitly locates it *on the same side as small capital*, supposedly sharing with it a contradiction with big capital.

Hegemonic Class Distinct From Reigning Class

There are difficult problems involved in locating the hegemonic fraction of the power bloc with precision, especially as the hegemonic class or fraction may be distinct from the *reigning* class or fraction. By *reigning class* or fraction is meant that one from which the upper personnel of the state apparatuses is recruited, i.e. its political personnel in the broad sense. This class or fraction may be distinct from the hegemonic class or fraction. Marx gives us a prime example in the case of Britain at the end of the last century. There, the hegemonic class fraction was the financial (banking) bourgeoisie, while the upper personnel in the administration, army, diplomatic corps, etc, was recruited from within the aristocracy, which thus occupied the position of reigning class. The same case can also arise under the hegemony of big monopoly capital, where the upper personnel often continues to be recruited from within medium capital, from the medium bourgeoisie. In exceptional cases, it is even possible for the political personnel to be recruited from within a class which is not itself part of the power bloc. An important example of this was fascism, where, under the hegemony of big capital, it was the petty bourgeoisie (the reigning class) which provided the upper cadres of the state apparatuses through the medium of the fascist party.

The distinction between hegemonic class or fraction and reigning class or fraction, which depends ultimately on the strategy of alliance and compromises necessary for the establishment of hegemony, is important. Its neglect leads to two consequences. It becomes impossible to reveal the real hegemony lying beneath the appearances of the political arena, the conclusion being that that class which occupies the top of the state

apparatus is the hegemonic class or fraction. For example, in the case of fascism, several social-democratic authors and politicians have been led to consider it as the dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie. Misled by the fact that the petty bourgeoisie occupied the place of reigning class, they identify it with the position of real hegemony, occupied by big capital. But there are other forms of state too in which the position of the reigning fraction, occupied by the petty bourgeoisie, has often masked the political hegemony of big capital coexisting with the petty bourgeoisie's reign: the most obvious example is Roosevelt's New Deal.¹

A second consequence of neglecting the hegemonic/reigning distinction is that the over-riding aim becomes to discover political hegemony in the automatic recruitment of the top of the state apparatuses from within the hegemonic fraction itself. This tendency shows itself today in formulations concerning 'state monopoly capitalism', which is held to represent 'the fusion of the state and the monopolies into a single mechanism'. The scientific proofs put forward consist of hidden relations of kinship and background between members of the big monopolies and the tops of the state apparatus and political organizations. This type of argument proceeds from theorems like 'Pompidou — Rothschild's banker'. It cannot be denied that a tendency is under-way in which the top of the apparatus is increasingly occupied by the actual members of big monopolies. But this is far from being a general or even a predominant tendency. Counter-examples are provided by the political hegemony of big monopolies which is often nowadays realized under social-democratic governments (Austria, Germany, Sweden, Britain under Wilson), i.e. under a political personnel originating mainly from the medium or even petty bourgeoisie, to say nothing of the labour aristocracy. Even in France, because of the particular way in which the bureaucracy and the state corps are constituted and because of the jacobin type of compromise between the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, the top of the state apparatus is still to a large extent occupied by persons originating from the medium or even petty bourgeoisie.

But though this is an important and undeniable fact, it does not prevent the establishment of political hegemony by big capital. If we deny it and consider that political hegemony must be identified with the position of the reigning class or fraction, we open ourselves to attacks which are both unjust and unnecessary. The correspondence between the interests of the hegemonic fraction (in this case the big monopolies) and state policy is not, in fact, based on any personal ties. It depends fundamentally on a series of *objective coordinates* concerning the ensemble of the organization of the economy and society, under the sway of the big monopolies, and the state's objective role with regard to it. The state is not a simple instrument which the hegemonic fraction has to hold physically, in a personal way, in its hands, if it is to adapt it to its interests. The problem of the possible differentiation between reigning and hegemonic class and fraction is connected with the question of the relative autonomy of social categories, such as the administrative bureaucracy, *vis-à-vis* the classes and fractions to which their members belong. Because of the objective role of the state, these categories thus serve hegemonic interests which often contradict their own class or fractional interests.

This, of course, does not mean that the fact that the upper state personnel belongs to one or another class or fraction is unimportant. For example, it is not without reason that there is now a growing interpenetration between the members and direct agents of the monopolies and the state personnel: it facilitates the monopolies' grip on the state. But it must be noted that this is not the most important question. A 'popular government', for instance, could not limit itself simply to modifying the upper ranks of the state personnel, thinking that good political intentions are enough to get things changed. The real task is to change the very structures of the state and of society. On the other hand, it is also obvious that these transformations cannot be carried through while the state apparatus and personnel are left intact. For structural transformations may remain completely ineffective, so long as they run up against reaction on the part of the state personnel. The importance of these questions emerges from a re-reading of Lenin's texts concerning the employment of bourgeois experts in the apparatus of the workers' state.

The Ideological Apparatuses of the State

Some observations are necessary on the form in which the contradictions between dominant, hegemonic and reigning classes and fractions are expressed within the *state apparatus*. The important point to bear in mind is that the state is composed of *several apparatuses*: broadly, the *repressive apparatus* and the *ideological apparatuses*, the principal role of the former being repression, that of the latter being the elaboration and incubation of ideology. The ideological apparatuses include the churches, the educational system, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois political parties, the press, radio, television, publishing, etc. These apparatuses belong to the state system because of their objective function of elaborating and inculcating ideology, irrespective of their formal juridical status as nationalized (public) or private. The repressive apparatus contains several specialized branches—army, police, administration, judiciary, etc. It has already been stated that the terrain of political domination is not occupied by the hegemonic class or fraction alone but by an ensemble of dominant classes or fractions. Because of this, the contradictory relations between these classes and fractions is expressed in the form of *power relations* within the apparatuses and their branches. These latter therefore do not all crystallize the power of the hegemonic class or fraction, but may express the power and interests of other dominant classes or fractions. It is in this sense that we can talk of a relative autonomy (a) of the various apparatuses and branches *vis-à-vis* each other within the state system and (b) of the ensemble of the state *vis-à-vis* the hegemonic class or fraction.

In the case of an alliance or compromise between the bourgeoisie and landed aristocracy in early capitalism, the bourgeoisie had its seat of power in the central bureaucratic organization, while the landed aristocracy had its in the church (in particular the catholic church). Such dislocations can also appear between the actual branches of the repressive apparatus: for example, before the arrival of Nazism in Germany between the two World Wars, the big landowners had their seat of power in the army, big capital in the judiciary, while the

administration was shared between big and medium capital. In the case of the transition towards the hegemony of big capital, the administration and the army often constitute the seat of power (the 'military-industrial complex'), while Parliament continues to constitute medium capital's seat of power: that is one of the reasons for the decline of Parliament under monopoly capitalism. Because of their function, the ideological apparatuses in particular possess a greater relative autonomy than the repressive apparatus and they can sometimes provide seats of power for classes other than the dominant classes. This is sometimes true of the *petty bourgeoisie*, because of the alliances and compromises made between it and the dominant bloc. In France especially, these compromises have taken on a great importance for historical reasons, and the *educational system* has for a long time constituted a state apparatus, as it were, 'made over' to the petty bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie has thus for a long time been set up as a class supporting the system.

None of this means that the capitalist state is an ensemble of separate parts, expressing a 'share-out' of political power among the various classes and fractions. On the contrary, over and beyond the contradictions within the apparatuses, the capitalist state always expresses a *specific internal unity, the unity of the power of the hegemonic class or fraction*. But this happens in a complex fashion. The functioning of the state system is assured by the *dominance* of certain apparatuses or branches over others: and the branch or apparatus which is dominant is generally that one which constitutes the seat of power of the hegemonic class or fraction. Thus, when hegemony is modified, modifications and displacements also occur in the dominance of certain apparatuses and branches *vis-à-vis* others. It is moreover these displacements which determine the changes in forms of state and forms of regime.

Thus every concrete analysis of a concrete situation must evidently take into account both relations of class struggle and real power relations within the state apparatuses, the latter being generally concealed beneath formal institutional appearances. Precisely analysis of power relations within the apparatuses can help us to locate the hegemonic fraction with accuracy. For example, by noting the dominance of one apparatus or branch over others and by also noting the specific interests served by that apparatus in a dominant fashion, we can draw some conclusions concerning the hegemonic fraction. But this must be a *dialectical* method: it is possible to start from the other side, by locating the hegemonic fraction, with its privileged relations to an apparatus or branch, within the ensemble of relations of a society; and in this way to solve the question of which is the dominant apparatus in the state, i.e. the apparatus by means of which the hegemonic fraction holds the *real controlling levers* of the state. But it is also clear that in the complex relation between class struggle and apparatuses, it is the class struggle which has the principal role. Institutional modifications do not lead to social movements, as a whole series of institutionalist sociologists believe: it is the class struggle which determines how the apparatuses are modified.

VI Expanded Reproduction of Social Classes

The enormous importance of this last remark will become clear if we consider it from the point of view of the expanded reproduction o

social classes. Social classes have existence only in the class struggle, which has an historical, dynamic dimension. It is only possible to constitute and even delimit classes, fractions, strata and categories by considering them in the historical perspective of the class struggle. This immediately raises the problematic of their reproduction. For some time now, a certain number of us have been analysing the important question of the reproduction of social relations. *As the reader will realize, this question, with all its implications, could be correctly grasped only within the problematic of social classes and the class struggle set out above.* Parallel to our analysis of state power, we emphasized one of the decisive roles of the state apparatuses (in particular, of the state ideological apparatuses)—namely, the role they play in the reproduction of social classes. So in these final remarks, I do not intend to go over this question in general again. I shall try rather to elucidate some aspects of it and give a warning against certain misinterpretations which may arise. I shall take as my example the role of the educational apparatus in the reproduction of social classes (an example which has recently been subject to Marxist analysis).

The state apparatuses including the school *qua* ideological apparatus, do not create class division but they contribute to it and so contribute also to its expanded reproduction. It is necessary to bring out *all* the implications of this proposition: not only are the state apparatuses determined by the relations of production, but furthermore they do not command the class struggle, as the whole institutionalist tradition claims: *it is rather the class struggle at all its levels which is in command of the apparatuses.* The exact role of the ideological apparatuses in the reproduction of social relations (including relations of social production) is, in fact, of supreme importance: for it is their reproduction which dominates the process of reproduction as a whole, particularly the reproduction of the labour force and means of labour. This is a consequence of the fact that it is the *relations of production*, themselves constitutively linked to the relations of politico-ideological domination/subordination, which dominate the *labour process* within the production process.

Reproduction of Positions, Reproduction of Agents

The expanded reproduction of social classes (of social relations) involves *two aspects which cannot exist in isolation from one another.* First, there is the expanded reproduction of the positions occupied by the agents. These positions mark out the *structural determination* of classes, i.e. the manner in which determination by the structure (relations of production, politico-ideological domination/subordination) operates in class practices. The way in which classes are determined also governs the way in which they are reproduced: in other words, as Marx himself emphasized, the very existence of a mode of production involving bourgeoisie and proletariat entails the expanded reproduction of these classes. Secondly there is the reproduction and distribution of the *agents* themselves to these positions. This aspect of reproduction, which involves the questions of who occupies a given position, i.e. who is or becomes a bourgeois, proletarian, petty bourgeois, poor peasant, etc, and how and when he does, is *subordinate to the first aspect*—the

reproduction of the actual positions occupied by the social classes: i.e. it is subordinate to the fact that in its expanded reproduction, capitalism is reproducing the bourgeoisie, proletariat and petty bourgeoisie in a new form in its current monopoly phase or to the fact that it is tending to eliminate certain classes and class fractions within the social formations where its expanded reproduction is taking place (e.g. the small-holding peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, etc). In other words, while it is true that the agents themselves must be reproduced—'trained' and 'subjected'—in order to occupy certain places, it is equally true that the distribution of agents does not depend on their choices or aspirations but on the very reproduction of these positions. It is important to emphasize that the distinction between the two *aspects* of reproduction (reproduction of positions and of agents) *does not coincide* with the distinction between reproduction of social relations and reproduction of labour power. These two aspects are features of the ensemble of reproduction inside which the reproduction of the social relations under discussion is dominant. But in the ensemble of reproduction, including the reproduction of social relations, the reproduction of places constitutes the *principal aspect*.

The state apparatuses, including the school *and* ideological apparatuses have different roles relative to these two aspects of reproduction. The structural determination of classes is not restricted to places in the production process alone (to the economic situation of 'classes-in-themselves') but extends to all levels of the social division of labour: the apparatuses enter into the process of determining classes as the *embodiment* of ideologico-political relations (of ideologico-political domination). It is in this way that, through their role of reproducing ideologico-political relations, they enter into the reproduction of the *positions* which define social classes. It should therefore be mentioned that the superstructure's role is not, as is sometimes maintained, limited to reproduction alone, any more than the base's role is limited to the production and reproduction of the means and products of labour: in fact, it extends to the reproduction of social relations. As in all cases of reproduction, the role of the apparatuses in reproduction is explicable only by reference to its role in the actual constitution of the mode of production and of its relations of production, i.e. its role in the actual production of social relations.

So the state ideological apparatuses enter actively into the reproduction of the positions occupied by the social classes. But if we are not to fall into an idealist, institutionalist view of social relations according to which social classes and the class struggle are the product of the apparatuses, we must recognize that this aspect of reproduction goes beyond the apparatuses, generally escapes their control and in fact assigns them their limits. We can say that there is a *primary, fundamental* reproduction of the social classes in and by the class struggle, in which the expanded reproduction of the structure (including the production relation) operates and which governs the functioning and the role of the apparatuses. To take an intentionally schematic example: it is not the existence of a school forming proletarians and new petty bourgeoisie which determines the existence and reproduction (increase, decrease, certain forms of categorization, etc) of the working class and the ne

petty bourgeoisie; on the contrary, it is the action of the production relations, of complex forms of economic ownership and possession on the labour process, i.e. the production process articulated with respect to political and ideological relations, and thus the economic, political and ideological class struggle which has the school as its effect. This explains why the process of reproduction by means of the apparatuses is marked by internal struggles, contradictions and frictions. It is in this way that we can understand the other side of the question: just as the expanded reproduction of social relations depends on the class struggle, so also does their revolutionary transformation.

Thus the fundamental reproduction of social classes does not concern only positions in the relations of production, i.e. social relations of production. It is no 'economic self-reproduction' of classes over and against an ideological and political reproduction by means of the apparatuses. It is no less than a process of *primary reproduction* in and by the class struggle at all stages of the social division of labour. This reproduction of the social classes (like their structural determination) is also concerned with the (social) political and (social) ideological relations of the social division of labour: these latter have a decisive role in their relation to the social relations of production. The reason is that the very social division of labour is not only concerned with political and ideological relations but also with the social relations of production within which it has dominance over the technical division of labour. This is a consequence of the fact that the production relations have dominance over the labour process within the production process.

To say that the primary reproduction of social classes depends on the class struggle also means that its concrete forms depend on the *history* of the *social formation*. Any given reproduction of the bourgeoisie, of the working class, of the peasant classes, of the old and new petty bourgeoisie depends on the class struggle in that formation. For example, the specific form and pace of the reproduction of the traditional petty bourgeoisie and small-holding peasantry under capitalism in France depends on the specific forms of their long-standing alliance with the bourgeoisie. It is therefore only possible to locate the apparatuses in this reproduction by referring to the class struggle: the particular role of the school in France can only be located by referring to the alliance between bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie which has for so long been a mark of the French social formation. Moreover, while the expanded reproduction of the *positions* occupied by the social classes 'invokes' the state ideological apparatuses (especially in the ideologico-political sphere), it is not limited to them.

Let us return to the case of the division between manual and intellectual labour mentioned above. That division, which has a role in determining positions in the social division of labour, is by no means limited to the economic domain. In that domain, it should be noted, it has no role of its own to play in class division, since productive workers (the proletariat) who produce surplus value/commodities are not to be identified with manual workers alone. The division between manual and intellectual labour can be grasped only when it is extended to the *political and ideological relations* of (a) the social division of labour within enter-

prises, where authority and direction of labour are linked to intellectual labour and the secrecy of knowledge, and (b) the ensemble of the social division of labour—relations which contribute to defining the position occupied by the social classes. But clearly it is neither the school nor any other ideological apparatus which create this division; nor are they the sole or primary factors in reproducing it, even though they do enter into its reproduction where (in their capitalist form) they appear as the effect of this division and its reproduction in and by the class struggle. In other words, the reason why the school reproduces the division between manual and intellectual labour *within itself* is this: because of its capitalist nature, the school is already situated in a global setting relative to a division (and a reproduction of the division) between manual and intellectual labour; and the reproduction of the school as an apparatus is functionally determined by that division. It is a division which goes beyond the school and assigns it its role: the separation of the school from production is linked to the direct producer's separation from and dispossession of the means of production.

In talking of state apparatuses, we must recognize that these apparatuses neither create ideology nor are they even the sole or primary factors in reproducing relations of ideological domination/subordination. Ideological apparatuses only serve to fashion and inculcate the dominant ideology. Thus, Max Weber was wrong in claiming that the Church creates and perpetuates religion: rather it is religion which creates and perpetuates the Church. In the case of capitalist ideological relations when Marx analyses the fetishism of commodities as relating directly to the process of valorization of capital, he offers us an excellent example of the reproduction of a dominant ideology which goes beyond the apparatuses: this was noted by Marx in his frequent references to 'correspondence' (implying a distinction) between 'institutions' and 'forms of social consciousness'. So the role of ideology and of the political in the expanded reproduction of the positions occupied by the social classes here directly corresponds to the class struggle which governs the apparatuses. It follows from what has been said above that the reproduction of positions in the relations of ideologico-political domination does indeed invoke the apparatuses, but it also invokes apparatuses *other* than the state ideological apparatuses—most importantly *the economic apparatus itself*. As a unit of production in its capitalist form, an enterprise is also an apparatus, in the sense that, *by means of the social division of labour within it* (the despotic organization of labour), the enterprise itself reproduces *political and ideological relations* concerning the places of the social classes. In other words, the reproduction of the all-important ideological relations is not the concern of the ideological apparatuses alone: just as not everything that goes on in 'production' is reserved for the 'economic', so the ideological apparatuses have no monopoly over reproducing the relations of ideological domination.

Let us now turn to the second aspect of reproduction, the reproduction of *agents*. It encompasses (as two moments of one and the same process) *the qualification/subjection* of agents to enable them to occupy positions and *the distribution* of agents to the positions. It is especially necessary to grasp exactly how the two aspects of reproduction (of positions and

agents) are articulated, if we are to see the inanity of the bourgeois problematic of *social mobility*. In this respect, the state ideological apparatuses, in particular the school, have a decisive function.

The reproduction of agents, in particular the notorious 'qualification' of the agents of actual production, is no simple technical division of labour (technical education) but rather an effective qualification/subjectation which extends into politico-ideological relations. The expanded reproduction of agents in fact corresponds here to an aspect of the reproduction of social relations which impresses its mark on the reproduction of the labour force. While this does entail a particular role for the school, we must remember that it is not just an on-the-spot technical education, but the very process of qualification/subjectation as such, which goes on within *the economic apparatus* as well, since the enterprise is more than a simple production unit. And this entails a particular role for the enterprise as precisely that apparatus which distributes agents within itself. In the case of *immigrant workers*, the economic apparatus actually has the dominant role: but it is not limited to them. If we forget the role of the economic apparatus and consider that agents have already been completely distributed in school, *prior* to the economic apparatus, we shall fall into the same type of one-way regressive explanation which considers that this complete distribution has already occurred in the family, *prior* to the school. Capitalist classes are not educational castes any more than they are hereditary castes. This regressive explanation does not hold for the relation between family and school because the family remains an active force during schooling; and similarly it does not hold for the relation between school and the economic apparatus because the school remains an active force in agents' economic activity.

It is important to see that the second aspect of reproduction is subordinate and indissolubly linked to the first. This is because a given type of reproduction and distribution of agents to positions depends on the expanded reproduction of those positions. It should not be forgotten that it is the labour market (as the expression of the expanded reproduction of production relations) which has the dominant role in distributing agents in the ensemble of the social formation. This is the case even when there is not, strictly speaking, a unified labour market, i.e. when the labour market's demands are directed to a sphere which is already compartmentalized—due partly to the specific action of the state ideological apparatuses (e.g. an unemployed graduate will not fill a place vacated by a semi-skilled worker). The reason is that, underlying the distribution aspect as well, there is a constitutive relation between distributive apparatuses and labour relations. Amongst other things, this constitutive relation imposes *limits* to the action of the state ideological apparatuses in compartmentalizing the labour market. For example, it is not the school which brings it about that *peasants* are the principal occupants of the spare places in the working class. On the contrary, it is *the exodus from the countryside*, i.e. the elimination of places in the countryside, plus the expanded reproduction of the working class, which governs the school's role in this respect.

Finally, in the case of *expanded* reproduction, in so far as the second

aspect of reproduction is subordinate to the first, *we must define the direct effects which the actual places have on the agents: this comes down to locating the primacy of the class struggle over the apparatuses.* Strictly speaking, we do not find agents who are in origin (in a world 'before' or 'outside school') 'free' and 'mobile', who circulate among the places following the orders of the ideological apparatuses, the ideological inculcation and the education which they receive. It is true that in the capitalist mode of production and in a capitalist social formation, social classes are no castes, that agents are not tied by their origin to determinate places and that the school and the other apparatuses have an important role of their own in distributing agents to the places. But it is also true that the effects of distribution show themselves in the fact that by means of the ideological apparatuses, the vast majority of bourgeois (and their children after them) remain bourgeois and the vast majority of proletarians (and their children after them) remain proletarians. This shows that the school is not the sole or principal reason for distribution taking this form. It is caused rather by the effects which the positions themselves have on the agents, effects which go beyond the school and beyond the family itself. We are not, as some current debates suggest, trying to decide which comes first—family or school—in a causal sequence. We are not even considering the 'pair' family/school as the basis of these effects of distribution. We are faced rather with a series of relations between apparatuses, whose roots are deep in the class struggle. In other words, the primary distribution of agents is tied to the primary reproduction of the positions occupied by the social classes. According to the stages and phases of the social formation, that primary distribution assigns to a given apparatus or series of apparatuses its own proper role which it is to play in distributing agents.

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Ronald Fraser

1936: Revolutionary Committees in Spain

Tajos is a small mountain village near Málaga; in 1936 it was one of the few socialist strongholds in a predominantly anarchist province. When, on 18 July 1936, the military rose to overthrow the Republic, a revolutionary committee was formed in Tajos as in every village and town not immediately captured by the Francoist forces. Under a variety of names—revolutionary, anti-fascist workers' defence—these committees were faced with the triple task of organizing militias to carry on the war, organizing the repression to destroy or intimidate the counter-revolutionary forces in their midst and organizing war production and food supplies. Their revolutionary élan was enormous, diverse and—ultimately—fragmented. The central government's power was virtually non-existent outside Madrid; but no working-class organization made a bid to seize power centrally.

Instead, throughout the Republican zone, delegates to the committees were generally elected or nominated by all the Popular Front parties which included the petty bourgeois republican parties; it was rare for these delegates to be ratified by popular vote. The committees thus never became popularly elected and revocable soviets, for no party or organization supported such a transformation. This entailed a failure to build into the committees the forms of popular armed forces which would become the cutting edge of a new revolutionary power.

As a result of these failures, the committees' power—almost always local—diminished after two to three months as the central government, now headed by the veteran socialist trade union leader Largo Caballero, regained 'control' and damped down the revolutionary upsurge.

During the seven months until Málaga was captured by the Nationalists, the Tajos committee was formally in control of the village. Old socialist militants today recall the experience. They were and remain moderates; had they not been it is unlikely that they would be alive today. The Nationalist repression in Málaga was even more ferocious than in Seville or Badajoz. In Tajos alone, where six landlords were shot during the revolution, it is certain that more than 50 working-class militants were executed. Many claim that at least a hundred were executed in the repression which continued until 1941—two years after the end of the civil war.*

* The following accounts are extracted from *The Pueblo*, an oral history of Tajos, by Ronald Fraser to be published in Britain by Allen Lane in July (£3.25), and in the USA by Pantheon Books.

Shoemaker

My father lost his shop, his livelihood and in the end his life due to a *cacique*. He voted for a candidate opposed to the ruling *cacique* and when the latter won he avenged himself. He got my father's licence taken away and had the shop made over to one of his supporters. My father was the victim of a parliamentary system which in the end led us all to tragedy.

That was in 1917 when I was about ten. My father had to do what he had never done before—work the land. My mother had inherited two or three plots and he tried to provide for us by working them. But he couldn't manage. One day he went to the sierra and returned ill. A cerebral congestion from which he died, leaving my mother to look after us.

Politics at that time was the exclusive privilege of those of property. At elections the *caciques* put on a great show. They laid on *paellas* and wine and cigars for the country people who were hardly ever able to eat a good meal. Those who could afford to wear boots could afford to buy votes. That was what *caciquismo* meant.

The ruling classes conceded universal suffrage only as long as they could manipulate it. Little by little the people began to wake up, we began to know that a nation called England and another called France existed; we were starting to read and learn something. But in a rather exotic way, without proper schools or education, so that we were only able to guess the value of the vote. When we discovered it, they took it away and brought in the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera which lasted seven years.

After my father died I became an acolyte in the Church. The priest had taken a liking to me at school and he paid me 2.50 pesetas a month. The other acolytes were all sons of the rich. They didn't toll the church bell as I did. At that time infant mortality, especially in summer, was enormous. Babies of six months, a year, died by the score. I earned a lot of money tolling the funeral bell—twenty-five centimos for each chime. The child's godfather by tradition paid for the funeral and the bells. 'What a fine godfather that child had,' the people used to say, 'the bell has tolled forty chimes.'

Christianity had a powerful effect on me. I don't know whether it was more than my father's death that started me thinking about social justice. To act not for personal gain, to do injury to no one—I seem to have had those ideals since childhood. My ideas became clearer after reading Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. This encyclical was the Church's response to Marxism, not to combat it but to show that the Church was on the side of the poor. Very few people in Spain paid heed to it. The big landowners thought Jesus Christ descended on

earth for them alone. I used to ask the priest why, when there was this marvellous encyclical, things remained as they were; either he wouldn't answer or said there was nothing he could do about it. Given all this began to move to the other side.

When I was twelve I was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Casas Nuevas. After three years there working for my board and lodging alone, I got a job with a shoemaker in Posadas. He paid me 400 pesetas a year. In my spare time I read a lot and took drawing lessons. I wanted to go to art school, but the way was barred without a *bachillerato*.

In Madrid where I did my military service I used to go often to the library of the *Heraldo* newspaper. As an ordinary soldier without education I wanted to find a place where I could learn something instead of spending my time in bars with the other recruits. In the library I met Professor Besteiros. He was a moderate Marxist, one of the leaders of the socialist party and later president of the UGT. I think he was impressed that an Andalusian went to a library to study; most Andalusians are too light-hearted to want to learn and above all when they're in Madrid where there's a different atmosphere, a sexual life. . . . It was in the library that my ideas really started to form, combining Besteiros with my own Christianity.

I had returned here when the Republic was declared in 1931. The monarchy overthrown without bloodshed—think of what that meant. It seemed like the start of a new era. There was great popular rejoicing. The *caciques* forbade demonstrations of any sort but that made no difference, his reign had come to an end.

But later I came to believe that the monarchy fell too easily. Power was given on a plate. Instead of being seized. That was one moment when socialist power could have been achieved. It might even have been unnecessary to cause bloodshed; democratic means like those of Allende in Chile today might have sufficed. And even if some blood had been spilled—would it not have saved the lives of one million people later, during and after the civil war? But the socialists were too naïve, they thought a coalition with the republicans was necessary. . . .

Between the dozen or so of us here who were really politically aware—there weren't any more—we created a branch of the socialist party and of the union, the UGT. The latter grew very quickly for any worker could join; but the party was restricted to militants whose task was to provide political guidance for the union which saw itself—locally, at any rate—concerned mainly with wage demands. In truth it was never able to do very much. It got wages raised and reduced working hours, but the landowners retaliated and started to tear up the vines. What could the union do? It was working within a capitalist system and the holders of capital, of land, were more powerful. The Republican government tried to correct some of the abuses of capitalism but its leaders were politically naïve in my view. They were intellectuals of the famous generation of '98, but for all their intelligence they didn't know the *pueblo*, the people. You have to understand the people in all their grandeur and pettiness to be a successful politician. And to change Spain, above all else, you have to control the state first.

The Republic controlled the state in appearance only. It failed to reform either the army or the Church properly. As for agrarian reform, it looked all right on paper. But the politicians let it be sabotaged by the very landowners against whom it was directed. I used to write to some of the Republican leaders to try to show them how the laws they had passed, which appeared so fine on paper, really looked from the perspective of a village like this. Take the law of municipal districts for example. It was meant to prevent landowners taking on labourers from other areas than their own as a measure against local unemployment. It looked fine but in practice it didn't work. The labourers of Tajos and Casas Nuevas were constantly at each other's throats because Casas Nuevas had as many labourers as Tajos but a very much smaller municipal territory. Were they to be deprived of their livelihood simply because they had no municipal district in which to work? No. The law should have been conceived within a national framework, not in terms of individual villages. I had often to intercede with the labourers of both villages, telling them they were all workers and must have the right to work where they could.

Those of us with a bit of education here wanted socialism from the top downwards. The rest wanted it from the bottom up. They were often good enough people, but they had only a vague notion of socialism. It was they who were at the throats of their fellow union members in Casas Nuevas about who had the right to work. And when the time came for them to die—as I know from experience—they didn't know what they were dying for, they had so little real ideology in them.

A revolution isn't made without understanding the nature of the state and of power, and seizing it. That's what I believe. And that's why the revolution here, if you can call it that, failed. It was necessary for the socialists to take power centrally. They had a second chance after the Popular Front's electoral victory in 1936 but they refused it. To seize power requires *cabeza, corazón y cojones*—brains, heart and balls to put it bluntly. It requires great intellectual capacity, political understanding, determination.

What revolution has ever been made without intellectuals as leaders? The French, the Russian, the Chinese, the Cuban. . . We had no intellectuals in the socialist party who were good politicians. Caballero was an able man and intelligent—but that's not the same as being an intellectual. Prieto was very clever, an astute politician but no intellectual. Besteiros, De los Ríos—good theoreticians but not politicians. There was no Lenin in Spain. It's a difficult thing being an intellectual. A painter, a musician, creates and sees his finished product because his effort is that of a single individual. But a great thinker works with collectivities; his work depends on society and people. If he acts individualistically what can one expect of him?

I know—if the socialists had seized power it would have led to a period of totalitarianism. I say that even though I'm a believer in democracy. I've always wanted a human socialism. To harm another is to harm the ideals of socialism. If someone does me harm my ideals can

remain unharmed; but if I do personal injury to another my ideal of socialism is injured at the same time. There is a universality in socialism which is to do good to one's fellow men. It is to create a better, more just society in which everyone can live humanly and not damage the other. So I would not have welcomed any form of totalitarianism, except in as far as I believe it would have led to something better. The transition period is the hardest of all—look at Cuba today. When we talked about it later we were always grateful that the Russian experience existed to help us through such a period. The Russian model with all the lessons one can draw from it.

But the socialists, like the republicans, were ingenuous. They were like the rabbits in that fable who see a dog coming in the distance. One says, 'that's a hunting dog,' and the others say, 'no, no, it's an ordinary dog'—and while they argue about the nature of the dog it comes and gobbles them up.

The leaders weren't prepared. Everything was fragmented. For the revolution to have succeeded the UGR and the anarchist CNT would have had to be unified as a proletarian force. They were of about equal strength then. But of course they weren't united. *Pueblo dividido es pueblo perdido* (a people divided is a people lost).

The CNT was apolitical, it wanted to achieve libertarian communism without participating in politics and without leaders. But without a leader where do you go? Nowhere in my opinion. Only the socialist party, as founded by Pablo Iglesias, united the social and the political. The anarchists didn't; not to speak of that exotic and anachronistic excrescence the FAI—for what else can one call it? Apart from some Latin American countries the wind has blown this anarchist phenomenon away.

When the military rose and the revolution started we in the socialist party were overwhelmed. What could we do? The people who took over thought only of violence. We were the strongest party here and yet we were helpless. We hardly ever met, to tell the truth. Those who took power had so little political consciousness that they robbed smallholders and others of the little they had and themselves refused to work. A revolution isn't made like that. It requires discipline and sacrifice—more sacrifice than ever before. The mass of the people here wasn't willing to make that sacrifice. The proof is that we had a food shortage in the end. At the beginning as much food as anyone could eat was handed out; later that food was lacking.

The revolutionary committee itself didn't govern the village. It couldn't govern the ungovernable, the extremists who were willing to do anything. They were the ones who ruled. These sort of people come up in every revolution and in Russia Lenin knew how to deal with them.

I never served on the committee. When the food shortage got serious I was put on the provisions committee in order to try to regulate supplies. From that I know what the extremists were like. They did what they wanted and no one could say a thing to them.

When they gutted the church I protested. Though I'm reserved by nature I was never a coward. They did harm to the revolution, nothing else. The church was a veritable religious museum with its altars, sculptures, paintings and reliquaries; the accumulation of centuries—and they burnt the lot. For what? For nothing. I told anyone who would listen what I thought; but who wanted to listen?

And the killings. . . They occurred at night when our backs were turned. People from other villages, from Casas Nuevas and Benamallí came for them; there were very few here who joined them in their dirty work.

Discipline and sacrifice. . . The Republic could have won. Perhaps they existed elsewhere but here, where the front was so close and we were almost trapped in a pocket, no one thought from the first day that we stood a chance. That's one of the reasons the people didn't want to work.

It didn't last long, seven months in all. On 7 February 1937, the nationalist army sealed off this pocket and captured us. It was the end of the first part of the tragi-comedy of my life!

A tragi-comedy whose full dimensions remained to be revealed. Arrested in Tajos when the nationalists took the village, Juan was jailed locally and then kept under house arrest. Later he was called up to serve in the nationalist army to fight against his own side. At the end of the war, on his return to the village, he was denounced by certain locals for having served on the provisions committee during the revolution. Arrested again, he was sentenced by a nationalist court-martial to twenty years and a day in prison. After serving two years of his sentence an amnesty was declared and he was released. He returned to the village and took up his old trade which, solitarily, he continues to ply.

JAIME ALARCON

Seventy

Marblecutter

We were at work in the quarry as normal that Saturday morning. We had a dog there which never barked, but that day, about eleven, it started to yap. 'Is that the *señorito* coming?' we said. It was. He called us and said, 'I've come to pay you—you don't know what is happening in Spain.'

'What's happening?' we asked, 'we don't know anything.'

'The revolution has broken out. I've come to pay you and take my cousins away.'

At noon we went down to the village to eat and all the radios were at full blast. The military had risen in Morocco.

The people went wild, they were in the streets, everyone was shouting and talking. Soon all the workers started to come back from the field. Many of them were working in the Málaga *sierra* at the time and they poured in. Some wanted arms. Others didn't know what to do. They weren't any arms anyway, other than a few shotguns the people had.

Have you ever known a revolution in your country? No? Well, it was very hard here. I was in agreement with it, but things weren't done; they should have been. Everything was salt and water—here and everywhere else. One flag, another flag, flags all over: UGT, CNT-FAI, Communists—all those parties! *Hombre*, what could come of all that? They weren't *unidos* enough. That's what was needed. The government itself didn't know what was going on.

I was in the UGT myself. I'd been in it in 1918 and I joined again when it was restarted. Not straight away. A friend of mine had started a branch of the radical socialists. One day I went for a shave. As I sat in the chair, Juan the barber said: 'What are you doing here?' 'What am I doing? I've come for a shave as usual.' 'You're not being attended to here.' 'But I've been shaved all my life in your shop.' 'Not any more until you join the union.' I went and put my name down then. I realized that if my friends were going to boycott me like that I wouldn't be able to find work. And that was right, what was needed was more *unidos*, not less. The UGT—that's where all the workers were. The CNT didn't have many members, it never caught on here.

I wasn't an extremist. No, señor. I remember during the strike we had in 1918 I was sent with a message from one of the union committees down to Casas Nuevas. When he gave me the letter he tucked it inside my hatband. I didn't know what it said, I can't read or write. A little way out of the village the *guardias* stopped and searched me. The other pair stopped me again. What a good job none of them thought of looking at my hat! When I got to Casas Nuevas and they read the letter out I wanted to die. It was all about how the priest should be killed and the *cacique* caught and his head chopped off. If the Guardia Civil had found it on me, I would have been killed. I wasn't in agreement with things like that, either in 1918 or in 1936.

I didn't have any position in the union or the revolutionary committee. I didn't have the education for that. Not that those on the committee understood very much. There were some on it who were there for the personal advantage. That's not the way a revolution ought to be, to my mind. One man in particular, a real reactionary whom the committee trusted, I don't know why! I came home one day from bringing in the grape crop—three weeks I'd been away—and I heard it said that my wife had come away with a basket of rations although I hadn't been working. I went home. 'Have you touched the food they gave you?' I said to my wife. 'No.' I picked up the basket, the kilo of bread, the oil, a bit of rice and chickpeas—and took it back.

'Ea, here's all the food you gave my wife, take it back. From here on those who don't work aren't going to get food, because it's going to be my pleasure to stay here to watch it.'

The man denied he had made the remark, denied everything. 'Are you going to deny it now, you piece of lard. Well, I'll tell you. . .'

I wasn't wrong. As soon as the village was taken he turned his coat and became an even bigger grafter than before. A rich man, rich enough to leave the village and set up in Málaga.

There were a few like him. They thought the revolution meant eating and drinking without working. But not many. The majority knew that the revolution meant working harder than before so as to produce more. And that's what they did.

The landowners should have been expropriated. Of course they should. It's sad and painful that a person should own half the world when I've got nowhere to place a foot. Why should it be so? Aren't we all born the same? With the difference that the one's father has left him a bit of land and my poor father left me nothing because he had nothing to leave.

But nothing was expropriated. We worked the land the owners had abandoned to bring in the crop. The union organized that. All the produce came to the village to be distributed among the people, and we got our wages in food.

I worked the land like everyone else. We stopped quarrying marble, there was nowhere to sell it. One day we got a letter from the owner, he sent it to the foreman and we took it up to the quarry to read. It said that if we wanted our wages we should go to a certain street in Málaga where he was. 'Nothing will happen if you come.'

I was delegated to go. When I got down from the lorry I was suspicious. Two militiamen from the village had come on the lorry. 'I'm going to my sister's house,' I said. As I went down the street I saw they were following me. It didn't smell good. I turned back. 'Aren't you going to your sister's?' they said. 'Ech, just for a meal—what's the good? I'll eat round here or if not I'll go without.' I knew by then that if I went to the owner's house as like as not I'd get shot. There were one or two people in the village who wanted to know where he was hiding because he was a reactionary and if they could get him they'd take over the quarry for themselves. Someone had informed on me, that's why the militiamen had come.

I'd worked on the land often enough. The quarry only provided work four or five months of the year. As soon as the sales stopped we were out of a job.

Once, before the war, we asked for a raise. The half dozen of us agreed. I said I'd speak to the owner. I overheard the other men saying they didn't trust me to do it. I went over to the boss that afternoon and told him straight out what we wanted. I've always believed in speaking my mind. He said he'd have to talk to the foreman. The next day we went to see the foreman. 'Who wants a raise? You? Stand over here then. Who else?' One other man came to stand beside me.

The rest wouldn't move. That Saturday the two of us were sacked. Just like that. I had to go to the ~~roga~~ of Málaga to look for work. The shopkeeper refused my wife any more credit 'because of what happened today in the quarry'.

There wasn't the ~~sueldo~~ there ought to have been. Hadn't we all agreed to ask for the raise? But when it came to it. . .

On the land none of us would go to work for less than the minimum. Never, however hungry we were. The landlords would always try what they could, and there were always some who bent their necks and worked for less. We called them *arrastrados*; grovellers. I was diggin the vines one time and the land was thick mud from the rain. We had to work barefoot or lose our *alpargatas* in the mud. The next day the foreman shifted us to lighter, sandier soil. Then he said we'd be earnin three pesetas instead of the 3.50 of the previous day. I and one other said we wouldn't work at that rate and walked out. But the other stayed.

I had my troubles during the revolution. One day I was summoned by the committee president. 'Go and bring in so-and-so,' he said. I didn't want to go but the militia chief warned me there'd be trouble for me if I didn't. At the end of the village there was a militiaman on duty. 'Take my shotgun in case he doesn't want to come.' 'I don't want any gun.' 'Here, take it just in case,' and he pulled out some cartridges. I had to take the gun. When I got to the small-holder's farm I shouted out his name. He heard me and called out: 'What do you say today *Buenos dias* or *salud*?'* 'Whatever you want. . .' 'Good, *buenos dias* then. I told him he was wanted by the committee and he came with me. I don't know what they wanted him for, but certainly nothing happened to him. Of that I'm sure because he lived to denounce me six months after the village fell. . .

The military prosecutor asked for a sentence of life imprisonment. 'A known leftist since 1918, a professional gunman who made three arrests and assassinated two men.' Relatives of the two landlords he was alleged to have killed testified on his behalf. He was sentenced to twelve years and a day. He served two and a half years in prison and a further two years in a labour camp. After being amnestied he went to live in Posadas where his wife had relatives and a plot of land.

**Salud* was the form of salutation used by the revolutionaries; *buenos dias* is the customary good morning.

Day-labourer

I had been president of the union for three or four months when the uprising started. The military rose in Málaga but were quickly defeated by the workers. We had to organize as quickly as we could; when the revolutionary committee was created I was elected to it by my union. Once the committee was in being I was named its president.

It was called the revolutionary committee though in truth the revolution was being made by the other side, not by the working class; the workers hadn't prepared sufficiently for it.

On the committee there were two UGT members, one from the socialist party, and one each from the two republican parties. The committee took over the running of village affairs. Every Saturday there was an assembly of the UGT to discuss and approve the decisions the committee had made. Later, after I left, I believe the committee was elected by popular assembly.

We met two or three times a week. The rest of the time we had to go on working at our usual jobs. None of us on the committee or in the militia got paid. Each of us had a particular function: supplies, militia, requisitions . . . We had disarmed the Guardia Civil and had them sent to Málaga; in their place we had to organize our own militia. They patrolled the countryside in pairs as the Guardia had done before, but they were workers, men from the UGT mainly.

The committee took over the produce of the land, but it didn't expropriate the land itself, nor the owners' rents, at least while I was here. No orders came from the government to expropriate land. The government, it's true, was weak at that moment. I believed the land should have been expropriated and distributed individually, a man has more interest in the land and works harder when he has his own plot. We had had experience of that because two years before a number of landlords handed over their vineyards to the union to run. They said the rise in wages had cut down their profits—huh! the profits with which before that they had bought cars and land on the backs of the workers. The union parcelled the vineyards into about 500 plots of a *fanga* each and they were drawn for by lot. Every worker in a family was entitled to one and the produce from it. They were worked individually—and a lot better too, as I know from experience because I had one.

During the uprising the committee took them over because there was so much more land that the owners had abandoned and which had to be worked.

If the government had organized a proper land reform at the start of the revolution it would have brought whole-hearted support for the

revolution from the *colonos** and everyone working the land. As it was many of these people—the sharecroppers especially—continued to cling to their landlords. They were a middle class really, these tenants and many of them were hostile to the revolution.

A lot of sharecroppers said the committee was bad in taking the landowner's half share. Why, when the owner's share was distributed to the people? Obviously the committee wouldn't leave the sharecroppers with the whole of their crop. If we had they alone would have benefited from the revolution. We expropriated the owner's share so that the revolution would benefit the working class as a whole.

A revolution isn't made by shooting off revolvers, by violence and nothing else. And yet a lot of people thought that was what it was. It was the worst problem I faced. There was too much freedom everyone had his own idea of what should be done, of what could be done. If people had had discipline, if they had listened. . .

Some of these extremists accused me of favouring the rich. More than once I was threatened. Yet I'd known as much suffering as any of them. I was eleven when I had to support my mother and two younger brothers on seventy-five centimos a day weeding wheat after my father died. At fourteen I was working alongside the men digging the vine. I've known what it is to have to beg a bit of bread from a *cortijo* after walking three or four days looking for work. I've waited at little country stores for friends who had got a day's job to ask them for a bite of bread when they came from the fields. My youth was one of hunger and suffering, for that was all the working class here knew at that time. Men out of work stuck to the sides of the houses like flies and as white as the walls with hunger. I didn't have to be told.

But for all that I couldn't let the extremists do things with which I didn't agree, especially since they wanted to resolve everything by brute force. I had to be in the middle trying to reconcile both sides.

I was eating supper one night, a fried egg, I remember it well, when some people came running and told me that one of the landlords—a woman—was being maltreated in her home by some labourers from Casas Nuevas who had come for day-wages they claimed from her. I ran to the house. The men were armed and the woman was in a terrible state. She hadn't the money to pay. I managed to get the men out and she said that one of her tenants might be able to pay his rent in advance so that she could pay the men. I went to see the tenant, collected the money and gave it to them.

Another day I was warned that a large group of labourers was coming up from Casas Nuevas to claim sixty or more days' wages from Don Cristóbal Saenz. They said they were going to set fire to his house unless he paid on the spot. I went in to see him. 'Don Cristóbal, the

*Renters and sharecroppers.

men are claiming wages from you, I don't know if their claim is just... 'Yes, the work was done but I'm not paying them.' 'They're outside now. If their claim is just I suggest you pay them or I can't take responsibility for what may happen.' 'Ah,' he said, 'you're forcing me to pay.' 'No, Don Cristóbal, I'm not forcing you, I'm saying that the blame won't rest on my shoulders if you don't.' 'If you're forcing me to pay, I'll pay.' 'No, I'm not forcing you... ' In the end he paid, but not on the spot. I had to take the money down to Casas Nuevas myself. I don't know what would have happened if he hadn't paid.

The rich went in fear. Some of them wouldn't leave their houses to collect the rations they, like everyone else, were entitled to. I, and others too, used to leave food for them at their doors. One of them came one evening to my house. 'Don José,' he said to me, 'they've ordered me to report to you.'

'I'm not don, call me *tu* as you've always done,' I answered. As president of the committee I neither got nor wanted any signs of respect. I was a *compañero* like everyone else. 'But Don José... ' 'Speak to me as you've always done. I say *Usted* to you out of respect and you say *tu* to me.' At last he used the usual form. Then I told him I hadn't sent for him and told him to return home. As he went out I saw the militiamen bringing in another man from the country. 'Who gave the orders to bring him in?' 'We're just detaining him,' the militiamen said. 'Let him go home, no one has ordered his arrest.'

The militia took things into their own hands. They'd go into a shop or a house and requisition goods, saying the order came from me. And I wouldn't know anything about it until it had been done. I had often to oppose them. We on the committee couldn't throw them out—we might have had to shoot them. In some places it was necessary to shoot militiamen and the like who assassinated people or looted. But they were too strong here, they had all the arms. When the people came from outside looking for landlords to shoot, the militiamen handed them over. That's what happened with the *señoritos* who died here.

Things got to the state where the workers began to threaten me. The committee organized several donations for hospitals for the wounded in Málaga. For one of them we decided to make a donation of chickens. The rich who had twenty chickens should give five and a worker with say ten should give one. As I came out of the town hall that day a labourer pulled a pistol on me. He said the workers shouldn't have to give any chickens. I looked him in the eyes. 'Put that pistol away.' I knew he hadn't the courage to shoot.

It happened again. I came back from Málaga one evening and found all the notables and a number of smallholders in jail—a dozen or more. I got my pistol, stuck it in my waistband and ordered the jail opened. As the men went through the square, which was full of people, a worker came up pointing a shotgun at me. Loudly, to make sure he heard, I told him to move away fast before I shot him.

A friend of mine in the militia told me the militiamen had met and

decided to call me out one night. I told my friend not to come with them if they did. 'As soon as I hear them I'll come out shooting.' The way some of them were going they'd have ended up shooting everyone, including me.

I had wanted no more for some time than to be able to leave. When the Republic began calling up men I joined the army. I was president of the committee less than two months.

Denounced on his return to the village at the end of the war, a sentence of life imprisonment was demanded at his court-martial. When the prosecutor rose the guardia who was next to me said, "don't worry, you'll be out of here in three or four days". And that's what happened. They released me, I was free. I'd spent about a year in prison waiting for the court-martial, that's all. It's a sign for sure that I never did anything bad.'

His two successors as presidents of the committee were less fortunate: they were shot.

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Jonathan Fast

Imperialism and Bourgeois Dictatorship in the Philippines

On 23 September 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law throughout the Philippines. Appearing on television, Marcos claimed that Maoist subversive elements' were plotting the overthrow of the Philippine Government and that this threat necessitated the introduction of extraordinary measures. The martial law proclamation, hardly a unique event in the recent experience of many ex-colonial countries, was nevertheless of special significance for the Philippines. The declaration must be viewed as a bench-mark in the growing political and economic crisis in the islands: it represents the first time in this century that the façade of democratic government (rather expertly fashioned by us colonial officials) has been ripped away. Marcos' action plunged the Philippines into a political crisis of a type never before experienced in the islands. Previously, a remarkably stable two party system had operated without serious challenge for decades, masking an inherently unstable social environment which was marked by extremes of flaunted wealth and grinding poverty. To understand the causes of the current crisis is no easy task, the more so

because the Philippines represents a curious configuration of social and historical forces.

The Specificity of the Philippines

The Philippines contains over seven thousand islands to the north of Indonesia and east of Vietnam and southern China with an area of 116,000 square miles. The northern island of Luzon is the largest and Manila, by far the largest and most important city in the Philippines, is located there. Mindanao, the second largest island lies to the south, and in between these two major land masses there are a dozen or so important though smaller islands known collectively as the Visayas. The Philippine population is now approaching 40 million, the result of a spectacular post-war rise in population. The current rate of population increase is well over 3 per cent, and had been so for more than two decades, making the Philippines one of the fastest growing countries in the world.¹ Hence, although GNP has risen at rates varying from 4.4 per cent (1956-1960) to 9.2 per cent (1948-1952) the net increase has been far lower. Per capita income in 1969 was estimated at £44 per annum.

The Philippines does not readily fit into the shared pattern of South-east Asian experience due mainly to differences in its historical development. This has guaranteed Philippine dissimilarity both from the region and, to some degree, from the experience of ex-colonial countries generally. As a consequence of over 300 hundred years of Spanish colonial rule, the Philippines became and now remains the only South-east Asian country where Christianity, or, more specifically Catholicism, is the dominant religion. Except for the Moslem minority in Mindanao and Sulu, the religion of the conquerors has taken firm root. In this respect the Philippine experience is more akin to that of Latin America than to the experience of other countries in South-east Asia (e.g. Vietnam), where Western religion usually gained the adherence of only a minority of comprador elements.

The Philippines is specific also in the sense that it is one of the few countries in the modern world to have suffered long stretches of colonial rule under two imperial masters. Spain conquered and ruled for over three centuries, giving up the colony to the US in 1898 as part of the settlement terms of the Spanish-American War. For another 41 years the Filipinos were ruled by the USA, almost the only 'official' colony Washington ever had. What this double dose of colonialism has done to Filipino consciousness is difficult to gauge with precision but it has created a 'western' orientation to a degree not to be found elsewhere in South-east Asia.

A third distinguishing factor defining the Philippine experience stems from the second. American colonial tactics were advanced for their time, comparable in several respects to post-war neo-colonialist techniques. Collaboration and subtlety replaced physical force; autonomy and a large measure of self-rule replaced a colonial civil service

¹ T. M. Burley, *The Philippines: An Economic and Social Geography*, London, 1971, p. 173.

American neglect and a willingness to allow the emerging indigenous ruling class to share in the exercise of power permitted the Philippine colony to develop in a way almost diametrically opposed to the experience, say, of the Vietnamese under the French. It has often been remarked by defenders of the US role in the Philippines that the Americans were 'reluctant' colonizers and much attention has been given to US moves to divest itself of the Philippines, beginning in the late 1920s and culminating in 1934. What has been overlooked is America's precocious understanding of collaborationist principles which made it unnecessary—in certain circumstances—to retain overt political control. In a number of important respects therefore, the 20th century colonial experience of the Filipinos was qualitatively different from the experience shared by almost all other colonies. This form of colonialism had major demobilizing effects upon Filipino culture, and created a form of ideological confusion that facilitated continued US imperialist control. A direct expression of this lay in the prevalence of English as a spoken language: there exists no one predominant Filipino language, and over ninety dialects of a Malay-Polynesian origin are found in the islands. Since 1937 one such dialect, the Tagalog tongue of Central Luzon, has been proclaimed an official language and today it is the first language of 20 per cent of the population and is understood by another 20 per cent. But the colonial language, English, was spoken throughout the islands. In more general terms, there remains a fixation with the USA within the ruling class which has certain effects even on the urban masses. The prevalence of US cultural forms and the recently seen movement to make the Philippines a US state are manifestations of this deleterious ideological inheritance of the imperialist period.

The Spanish Legacy

The Americans were the last in a line of powers that have shaped the Philippines. By the 9th century AD Arab traders had become a pervasive presence in South-east Asia, and as they gradually expanded their trade to Borneo, Sulu, and the Southern coast of Mindanao so too did Islam gain a foothold in those regions. By the 16th century the Islamic tide had reached as far north as Manila, where the Moslem kings and *datus* first met the Spanish *conquistadores* in the 1560s and 1570s. Spanish conquest of the Philippines halted the spread of Islam and aggressive Spanish proselytizing introduced Catholicism to Luzon and the Visayas. But South-eastern Mindanao and Sulu were never successfully subjugated and the Spanish managed to establish garrisons in the larger towns only as late as the 1850s. Filipino Moslems, who today number about 4 million, have traditionally referred to Luzon and the Visayas as 'the conquered North'.

Early Spanish adventurers came to the Philippines looking for gold and other precious metals. Finding none, they were content with missionary work, and the use of Manila as an entrepôt for trade between China and Mexico. Commercial agriculture was not introduced until the late 18th century, when a tobacco monopoly was established. Manila was not opened to the trade of other nations until 1835. By the mid-19th century the older forms of colonial exploitation based on

mercantilist principles began to give way to newer capitalist economic patterns based on agricultural commodity production for developing world markets. American and British traders began to take advantage of Spanish commercial weakness in the Philippines and the establishment of Western merchant houses after 1835 facilitated the growth of a capitalist agricultural sector. Sugar, hemp, tobacco and coffee became important export crops in the second half of the 19th century.

Two important changes resulted from the growing commercialization of Philippine agriculture after 1835. First, although *politically* still a Spanish colony, *economically* the Philippines became increasingly a *de facto* Anglo-American preserve. By the 1880s, for example, Britain and the US controlled over 90 per cent of total Philippine trade, while Spain was responsible for less than 6 per cent.² The second development was a consequence of the first: the rise of the Anglo-American merchant houses, coupled with Spanish inability to participate fully in the new commercial agricultural opportunities, allowed a mixed-blood Spanish *mestizo* class to engage in productive enterprise within the growing export economy.

Mestizo capital accumulation was bound up with Western markets and Western commercial houses. Socially too, the *mestizo* class looked to the West and began to conceive of itself as a distinct social grouping. The *mestizo* planters began to accentuate the differences between themselves and the *indio* or pure-blooded Malay population, for example. The *mestizos* identified with Spain and started to refer to themselves as *Filipinos*, a term which had previously referred only to pure-blood Spaniards born in the colony. By the 1870s and 1880s the sons of the rising local bourgeoisie were being sent to Spain to be educated. Exposure to European ideas led to dissatisfaction with the constraint of Spanish rule and, ultimately, to demands aimed at winning political and economic concessions from the colonial government. The Propagandist movement, as it came to be called, was essentially reformist in nature and its leaders hoped, ultimately, for closer ties with Spain and for representation in the Spanish *Cortes*. The Propagandists made little headway against Spanish authority and their failure spurred the formation of a secret, more militantly nationalist movement in 1892 known as the *Katipunan*. Unlike the Propagandists who were fundamentally assimilationist, the *Katipunan* was the first organization to work seriously for a revolutionary overthrow of colonial rule. By 1895 this became an increasingly realistic prospect as Spain became extended trying to suppress the war of independence in Cuba.

The Advent of US Imperialism

In 1896 the *Katipunan* Society was discovered by the Spanish authorities and fighting broke out between the Spanish and nationalists. After a year of indecisive struggle, landowners and other ex-propagandist elements who had attached themselves to what had become the Provisions Republican Government began to see the possibility of achieving their

² Senate Document No. 158, Report of the Philippine Commission, Vol. IV, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1901, p. 60.

reformist goals via negotiation with the Spanish. Terms were reached between the Spanish and the rebel leader General Emilio Aguinaldo in November 1897, but not all of the Filipino leaders were content to lay down their arms in exchange for vague Spanish promises of reform and greater Filipino representation in the colonial government. Fighting broke out again in February 1898, the rebel Filipino Army now enjoying greater success against the Spanish. In April, the us declared war against Spain and the American Commodore George Dewey steamed into Manila Bay to sink the Spanish fleet. After this mission had been achieved, Dewey remained at anchor and did not sail away. He might logically have been expected to do so, since the Americans were fighting the Spanish in Cuba and tactically speaking the destruction of Spain's Manila fleet was all that was required of Dewey.

After Dewey's victory a three way stalemate developed. The Filipino Army had beaten the Spanish back to Manila where they were holed up in the old walled city. The Filipinos were dug in along the perimeter of the city and Dewey, without force to land, remained at anchor in Manila bay. In June the Filipinos declared their independence and established a government at Malolos, a town not far from Manila. The Malolos government went unrecognized despite its total control of the entire territory of the Philippines, save for the Spanish garrison in Manila. Since the Spanish cause was doomed, in August 1898 Spain chose to surrender to the usa after a mock battle had been choreographed between them. As a result, the Americans replaced the Spanish forces in Manila and for the next six months, as Aguinaldo prevaricated, the Americans reinforced their garrison to the point to which they felt ready to attack the Filipinos.

Dewey's reluctance to leave should have served as a warning to the Filipino leaders as to America's ultimate intentions regarding the Philippines, but the Provisional Republican government was prepared to accept verbal promises from Dewey that the United States did not covet the Philippines and wished only to provide disinterested assistance to the Filipinos in their fight for independence.

The events of 1897-98 pointed up the greatest single weakness of what later became an unsuccessful, decade-long struggle against the United States for Filipino independence. The legacy of the Propaganda movement seriously weakened the Filipino liberation movement at a critical point. Aguinaldo's actions epitomized a general tendency to opt for vacillating, capitulationist tactics, often in the face of bitter opposition within the Filipino camp. This thread of uncertainty repeated itself at various times and in various forms throughout the Philippine-American War and was rooted in the growing class contradictions within Philippine society. The original coalition of class forces behind the independence movement contained three elements: the *mestizo* *hacendados*, the urban middle class of professional bourgeois and state employees who provided the officer corps of the Filipino army, and the *indio* peasantry. The history of the independence struggle is one of successive defection by these first two classes, so that they then formed an alliance with us imperialism against the peasantry.

The Philippine-American War

The us assault began in February 1899, and was timed to influence the ratification in the us Senate of the Paris Peace Treaty ceding the Philippine colony to the us. That the Philippines were no longer Spain's to cede was a legal nicety which did not overly concern either party.

In the opening battle of what was to be one of the bloodiest wars in imperial history, the Filipinos tried to maintain their position on Manila's perimeter; but vastly superior American firepower had a telling effect and after two days of fighting the Filipinos had sustained nearly 10,000 killed.³ In spite of Aguinaldo's predilection for positional war, fought along classical military lines, the Philippine Army was forced to resort to mobile warfare where knowledge of the countryside and universal support from the people could be utilized to advantage.

The Americans found the first battle so easy that they confidently predicted victory within a matter of weeks. But when the Filipinos resorted to mobile tactics and, when they later adopted outright guerrilla warfare, the us forces discovered to their dismay that they were engaged in a war which they were ill-suited and ill-equipped to fight. Early attempts to garrison the islands simply dispersed the American troops which were then subject to harassment and counterattack. The Filipinos suffered from lack of firearms (only one partisan in four was armed)⁴ and they often went into battle armed only with bolos—long bladed knives—and spears. But by stealth and subterfuge, by attacking in the dead of night and during driving tropical rainstorms and, most of all, by their consistent involvement of the Americans in hand-to-hand combat, the Filipinos reduced the odds against them.

After a year of protracted fighting, the American army began to resort to now familiar tactics. All the 'niggers' (the American term for Filipinos) were enemies, whether they bore arms or not. Frustrated by their inability to engage the guerrillas on advantageous terms, the American soldiers resorted to the destruction of villages and the killing of civilians. After the second year of fighting, more than 75,000 American troops were in the Philippines but the war was no nearer a conclusion than it had been at the beginning. The Americans decided to escalate the struggle against the Filipino masses in lieu of the elusive guerrilla, and as a result of this decision the war degenerated into a grisly slaughter of non-combatants. Beginning in April 1901, and continuing for a year, four successive 'depopulation campaigns' were launched. The first, in Northern Luzon, was described by an American Congressman: 'Our soldiers took no prisoners, they kept no records they simply swept the country and wherever and whenever they could get hold of a Filipino they killed him.'⁵ In August, in the island of Panay, the technique was repeated. American troops cut a swathe 60 miles wide from one end of the island to the other, burning everything in their path. In September, troops invaded Samar island with order

³ Leon Wolff, *Little Brown Brother*, Manila, 1968, p. 226.

⁴ Wolff, p. 290.

⁵ Quoted in Wolff, p. 352.

to burn and kill 'everything over ten',⁶ and in December, in Batangas province, the entire population (300,000) was herded into detention camps. American impatience with continued Filipino hostility was expressed by General J. Franklin Bell, the American commander during the Batangas campaign. Bell announced his intention to '... create in the minds of the people a burning desire for the war to cease—a desire . . . so intense so personal . . . and so real that it will impel them to devote themselves in earnest to bringing about a real state of peace, that will impel them to join hands with the Americans . . .' Further, since 'practically the entire population has been hostile to us at heart' it would be necessary to keep the people 'in such a state of anxiety and apprehension that living under such conditions will soon become unbearable'.⁷ Conditions did indeed become unbearable and by American admission over 100,000 died in Batangas alone as the result of Bell's pacification campaign. The number of Filipinos killed by the American Army which 'kept no record' can really only be guessed. Even more difficult to estimate were the numbers who died due to the effects of concentration camp life where appalling conditions and infectious disease took their murderous toll. General Bell, in a *New York Times* interview, estimated that over 600,000 people in Luzon alone had been killed or had died as a direct result of the conditions of the war. This estimate was made in May 1901 and thus does not include the number killed subsequently in the four campaigns noted above. As many as a million Filipinos, out of a population which then totalled seven million, may have met their deaths at the hands of the Americans. Although the Americans unilaterally declared the war to be over on 4 July 1902, bitter fighting continued for many years thereafter. The last guerrilla leader on Luzon was not captured until 1910 and sporadic Moslem uprisings continued until as late as 1916.

Class War: Mestizo Versus Indio

The anti-colonial resistance obscured to a large degree a developing struggle within Philippine society which divided the Filipino population in the face of the American onslaught. In order to placate growing domestic hostility to us involvement in the Philippines, us President William McKinley sent a Federal Judge, William Howard Taft, to the Philippines to establish a civil government, replacing rule by us military officials. Taft quickly saw that the commercial *mestizo* interests and the remnants of the old Propagandists did not share the same hostility to American war aims as did the *indio* peasantry.

The critical problem facing the *mestizo hacenderos* in the post 1885 period was the shrinking Western market for cane sugar due to the rapidly increasing production of beet sugar in Europe and in North America; Philippine producers were losing profitable markets due to subsidized beet competition and tariff barriers. Hemp (essentially a smallholder crop) replaced sugar as the most important Philippine export. Taft

⁶ Moorfield Storey and Julian Codman, *Secretary Root's Record: Marked Severities in Philippine Warfare*, Chicago, 1902, p. 116.

⁷ Storey M. and Codman J., pp. 71-73. An analogous form of counter-insurgency through massacre was practised after the us occupation of Haiti in 1916.

therefore perceived that the *mestizo* planters needed a protected market for their sugar and soon after his arrival he began to argue for a reduction in the us tariff on Philippine sugar. In 1902 a 25 per cent reduction in the tariff was passed by the us Congress, with the promise of further lowerings in time. But the mere prospect of such an aid was in itself sufficient to win the political allegiance of the *mestizo* elite.

This compromising attitude also infected the officer class of the Philippine Army. In the second and third year of the war the need to present a united nationalist front gave way to the latent class contradictions. The Army officers came from urban professional backgrounds and, with a few notable exceptions, were prone to elitist thinking and capitulationist attitudes. This was especially true as the Americans were prepared to treat these men as fellow officers and to offer them posts in the colonial civil service if they were prepared to declare their allegiance to the American cause. Perhaps the leading example of this phenomenon was the case of Aguinaldo, who was captured in April 1901. Within a month of his capture, Aguinaldo signed an oath of allegiance to the us and a declaration calling upon his erstwhile comrades to quit the war. The statements were, naturally enough, reproduced and posted throughout the islands and this affected the morale of the guerrillas. In this manner, the united front of 1899 gradually disintegrated as both wealthy planters and professional elements began to make their peace with imperialism. By 1902 resistance to the Americans was confined largely to *indio* workers and peasants who carried on a desperate struggle against both the imperialists and collaborating elements. Class struggle then coincided with the national struggle, but only after any immediate prospect for winning either had long past.

The divisions of the anti-American resistance have constituted Filipino society. The *mestizo* elite performed so impressively in the service of us colonialism that the Americans were willing to turn most of the administrative apparatus over to this group. A Philippine legislature was inaugurated in 1907 and after 1916 the colonial bureaucracy was almost wholly in the hands of Filipino *compradors*, us imperialism exercising what really amounted only to veto power in the person of the Governor-General. Below him lay the colonial apparatus and the Filipino ruling class that were fortified through collaboration with imperialism. Just as the Spanish had recruited the pre-existing *datus* to assist them in their consolidation, so the us imperialists co-opted the landowning class, who were given a parallel reinforcement by the development of an export sector tied to the us. In the rural areas these landowners were able to increase their holdings as the incidence of landlessness and peasant indebtedness grew, and throughout the period of the us occupation there was a growing polarization of land ownership. In 1903 an estimated 81 per cent of all land holdings were worked on directly by their owners; by 1938 this figure had fallen to 49 per cent and in the post-war decade the rate of polarization increased further. By the 1950s an estimated two-thirds of all the rural population were landless and of these the great majority were sharecroppers working the fields for a small percentage of the crop. It was this pre-existing system of social and political exploitation in the

countryside which the us colonial system encouraged, after the successful division of the different Filipino classes in the independence war.

The Economic Results of Colonialism

The promise of further reductions in the us tariff on Philippine sugar was kept with the passage of the 1909 Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act. In several fundamental respects this Act directed the evolving Philippine economy, guaranteed its export agricultural orientation and cemented the relationship between the us and the client Filipino agricultural interests. Philippine sugar production was relatively costly and inefficient. This was due to the fragmented nature of land holdings, conditions of climate and soil, and lack of capital investment in efficient milling techniques. The Payne-Aldrich Act eliminated the us tariff on Philippine sugar and duty-free access to the American market more than overcame these negative factors. The tariff concession made Philippine sugar instantly profitable, giving the Philippines a competitive edge in the prized us market.

A second, corollary feature of the 1909 legislation was the opening of the Philippine market to us products. The price of tariff concessions on sugar was the creation of a captive market for us imperialism.⁸ A third result was essentially a negative one. The Philippines did not become a major area of attraction for us capital investment in large-scale agriculture. This was due largely to the passage of earlier legislation limiting the size of land holdings in the Philippines. This dampened whatever enthusiasm might have existed for the development of American plantation production in the islands.⁹ Consequently, Philippine commercial agriculture was developed largely by Filipino capitalists and although American investment was never absent, it also never came to dominate commercial production as it did in Cuba (to use the most apt parallel).

By the 1920s sugar had come to play an increasingly dominant role in the Philippine export economy, because of both the concentrated nature of production and the sizable capital investment in milling facilities, and because duty-free access to the American market had increased output. This latter consideration began to take on important political overtones as over-production and a chronic world glut grew to be the bane of the world's sugar producers in the years preceeding the depression. This was especially true for those producers—such as Cuba—whose markets were not politically guaranteed by the sort of tariff concessions enjoyed by the Filipinos. Matters were more complicated because most of the Cuban plantations and mills were owned by American corporations. There was a certain irony in this situation: the Philippines, formally a part of the American empire (whereas Cuba was not), enjoyed tariff favours in the us market not

⁸ The us would have implemented these economic changes much earlier than 1909 had it not been for provisions contained within the Treaty of Paris preventing it from doing so for an interim of a 10 year period.

⁹ The land restrictions were written largely at the insistence of domestic us beet sugar producers who wanted to nullify Filipino cane competition by limiting corporate landholding to an unprofitably small size.

shared by Cuba. The advantage thus held by Filipinos was proving to be the ruin of American sugar capital in Cuba.

Independence and the Sugar Question

At precisely the same period that American producers in Cuba were trying to curtail sugar production and halt falling prices, Philippine production was soaring to record levels, increasing by over 20 per cent per annum for the decade beginning in 1924.¹⁰ Such a situation could obviously not long be tolerated, especially in light of the considerable economic power of the Americans in Cuba. American investors were able to join forces with Western US beet sugar interests in a concerted effort to nullify the Philippine advantage in the American market. It was decided that the best strategy to achieve this end was to blur the purely economic considerations by interjecting the political issue of Philippine independence. Beginning in the late 1920s a series of bills were introduced in the US Congress calling for the independence of the Philippines. The terms of independence contained within all these bills included the cessation of American preferences for Philippine sugar. It was devious to combine the economic aims with the question of independence—other sectoral interests opposed it bitterly—and it was something of a novel development in the history of colonial-metropolitan relations; but it was crudely effective in winning allies to what was otherwise a transparently commercial ploy.

Filipino sugar producers, early supporters of the colonial relationship and staunch advocates of the continuation of their profitable arrangement, had always held political power in the colonial administration commensurate with their economic dominance. Beneath the veneer of democratic institutions, a wealthy, landed oligopoly ruled the Philippines via the Nacionalista Party in comfortable alliance with colonial administrators. However, as there was an electoral system, Filipino politicians had to maintain the fiction that their uppermost goal was Philippine independence and an end to imperialist rule. As long as independence was a remote prospect, such a stand was politically useful and on the other hand it did not jeopardize the profitable economic relationship between planter and colonizer which had evolved. But after 1928 the oligarchy suddenly had the independence issue thrust upon it with a vengeance, as a corollary to the planned restriction of the most profitable industry in the islands.

Oligarchic politicians were caught by the contradictions of their position. They could not (publicly) argue for the continuation of colonial rule; to do so would have been a politically suicidal course of action. But nor could they watch the Philippines' rivals, the Cuban-American and American Beet sugar producers, dictate changes in the tariff concessions which were the lifeblood of the island sugar industry and (for many of them) the foundation of their own personal fortunes. Inevitably, their public posture—wholeheartedly supporting independence—was in striking contrast to the privately-held opinions of the oligarchy.

¹⁰ Alden Cutshall, 'Trends in Philippine Sugar Production', *Economic Geography*, Vol. 14, April 1938, p. 157. By 1933 sugar constituted over 60 per cent of Philippine exports and 30 per cent of national income.

The impending crisis became a reality in 1934 with the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act: this established a ten year interim Commonwealth Government to culminate in ultimate independence while it simultaneously restricted the amount of duty-free Philippine sugar permitted to enter the US. Independence on these terms was, in reality, a bitter defeat for the whole Filipino ruling class and for the rest of the decade they tried to force a revision of the trade provisions at the expense of the scheduled independence.

The class divisions within Philippine society on the question of independence surfaced during the subsequent debate. As Filipino political leaders were frantically trying to modify the economic terms of the Tydings-McDuffie Act peasants and workers were organizing to demand immediate independence. Perhaps the most notable peasant organization of the early 1930s was the *Sakdal* Party. The *Sakdalistas* were ideologically eclectic; they espoused a primitive socialism tinged with pro-Japanese and fascist notions. But the *Sakdalistas* advocated immediate independence and an end to landlordism, two issues which struck a responsive chord with the Central Luzon peasantry. After a brief and unsuccessful period as a legal opposition party (from 1907 until 1946 Philippine politics was dominated by the elitist and essentially pro-American Nacionalista Party), the *Sakdalistas* turned to putschist tactics of armed revolt in hopes that an isolated flare-up would ignite a general conflagration in Central Luzon. In May 1935, on the eve of a general referendum on the question of the proposed ratification of the Philippine Constitution, 65,000 partially armed peasants, surrounded Manila and fought three engagements with the Philippine Constabulary troops. The rebels were quickly subdued and when it became evident that the action had not sparked the hoped for general uprising, the *Sakdal* leader commented plaintively, 'We know that the American Government in the islands is so strong that revolt against it means suicide. But what else can we do?'¹¹ The movement quickly faded from the scene but other left wing organizations, including the Communist Party (*Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*), founded in 1930, and the Socialist Party reflected the growing militancy of the Central Luzon peasantry. The rise of this peasant opposition was met on the landlord side by the creation of counter-revolutionary vigilante groups, private armies financed and organized by oligarchs to attack resisting peasants. Despite the relative stability of US imperialist control, the state did not have a firm grip on the rural areas and had never maintained a monopoly on violence. This vacuum enabled the individual landowner to build his own repressive force and even in the 1960s, when the state was stronger and the peasant movement weaker, this phenomenon still prevailed in some of the rural areas. In 1970 the Manila authorities stated that there were around eighty political bosses in the rural areas, with their own private armies. About half of these were Senators and Congressmen and the rest were provincial governors and mayors. In addition there were just over 500 'private security agencies' which hired men out to oligarchs for political purposes.

¹¹ Quoted in David Sturdevant, 'Sakdalism and Philippine Radicalism', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1962, p. 199.

The Second World War and the Rise of the Left

On the eve of the Pacific War, oligarch efforts to force the us to modify the economic conditions of independence had failed, in spite of seven years of intensive effort. Three and a half years of Japanese occupation was to provoke another crisis in Philippine society, once again exposing the polarized class forces in a manner reminiscent of the struggle against the Americans at the turn of the century. After the bombing of Manila, which occurred simultaneously with the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan became the third imperial power to occupy the Philippines in less than half a century. Although a small number of Philippine government officials accompanied Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon to exile in Washington, the bulk of Filipino politicians continued at their posts and served the Japanese authorities, forming the core of the Japanese puppet government. The Filipino landlords, too, had little quarrel with Japanese political principles and formed the basis of native support for Japanese war aims in the islands.

Peasant reaction to the Japanese also repeated the patterns of the earlier experience. Guerrilla units formed in the countryside almost spontaneously and sharp resistance to the Japanese continued throughout the years of occupation. Some of the guerrilla units fought under the auspices of the us but by far the largest and most effective organization was the PKP-led *Hukbalabap*.

The Huks were successors of militant trade unions and peasant unions which had emerged in Central Luzon during the 1920s and 1930s. The deteriorating social and economic conditions, rising rates of land tenancy, rural indebtedness and pauperization which accompanied the expansion of commercial agriculture and falling world prices spawned a number of reformist peasant demands which included a call for land redistribution and an end to landlord control over the courts and the machinery of government. The prevalence of private landlord armies prevented the peasant unions from achieving even a fraction of their limited programme, but this situation changed dramatically under wartime conditions. In the power vacuum created by the Japanese invasion, many landlords fled to the safety of their Manila town houses for the duration, or pleaded with the Japanese for protection against an armed peasantry. In Huk controlled areas especially, resistance to the Japanese was organized effectively but in addition, collaborators were shot, *haciendas* were broken up and the land distributed among the tenants. Local government was established under Huk auspices in many areas of Central Luzon and functioned until the American re-invasion of the islands in 1944-45.

Post-war politics in the Philippines took on a strange, unique coloration. Those who co-operated with the Japanese were held to be traitors to the Philippine Commonwealth and to the us government—indeed, thousands were formally charged with the crime. Most of those who resisted the Japanese occupation however, fought as allies of the us and initially welcomed the American forces who had come to re-occupy the islands. Nowhere, apparently, was serious objection raised against defining loyalty on these terms; i.e. loyalty to one colonial

master as against another. Even the *Hukbalabap* to its immediate cost, found itself guilty of failure to take a principled view on this matter. The Hukboms welcomed the Americans as fellow comrades in the anti-fascist struggle and hoped that the considerable Huk wartime achievements against the Japanese would generate support—or at least tolerance—for their social goals. Immediately upon their arrival, the Americans made clear that such was decidedly not to be the case. The Americans swept through Huk strongholds, disarming and arresting Huk guerrillas at gunpoint and smashing the local and regional guerrilla infrastructure where it existed. The similarity with Greece is striking: in both countries a local Communist Party lost a powerful position acquired during the anti-fascist campaign. In both an initial voluntary demobilization was exploited by imperialism which was then able to withstand a belated Communist counter-offensive. While local conditions contributed to this political error, the overall responsibility lay with the line of class collaboration at that time dominating the communist movement.

In their initial drive through Central Luzon the American forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur arrested and jailed hundreds of Filipino businessmen, politicians and landlords on charges of collaboration and treason. By a single act, however, MacArthur negated the effect of this policy when he gave special dispensation to a leading pre-war politician, Manuel Roxas. MacArthur claimed that although Roxas had served as a cabinet minister in the Japanese puppet government he was actually working as a double agent and secretly aiding the guerrillas. Supporting evidence for this was never forthcoming; many gained the impression that pre-war friendship with MacArthur had more to do with Roxas' exoneration than his wartime activity.¹² By this exoneration, however, MacArthur gave the collaborationist bourgeoisie the chance it needed to restore itself to its pre-war position.

Counter-Revolution and Neo-colonialism

From its weakened position of 1945 when its leading members were imprisoned in jail, the Filipino oligarchy managed within the space of a single year to return to positions of unchallenged political and economic power. This was achieved—indeed could only be achieved—with the enthusiastic backing of the US and the phoenix-like revival of ruling class fortunes owed much to the absence of any sentimentality on the part of American policy planners. The choice facing the Americans was clear enough; either they were to support the nationalist and leftist forces which had grown in strength during the war and who now threatened to move into the power vacuum recently occupied by the oligarchy, or they could support the latter, who were traditionally pliable, and now chastened by their wartime miscalculation.

Elections for the first President of the soon-to-be independent Republic of the Philippines were scheduled for April 1946. The choice of candidates was limited to two well known pre-war politicians; Sergio Osmeña, who had replaced Manuel Quezon as Commonwealth Presi-

¹² See for example, Hernando Abaya, *Betrayal in the Philippines*, New York, 1946. Abaya was arrested by the Marcos regime after the martial law declaration.

dent upon the latter's death in exile in America, and Roxas, who regained much of his pre-war influence after MacArthur's initial vote of confidence. As one of a handful of top politicians in the exile government, Osmeña's 'loyalty' was never questioned. Roxas, however, was considered by many to have been one of the leading collaborators despite MacArthur's rather imperious statements to the contrary. In any event, there was no secret about the fact that Roxas had become the 'collaborator's candidate'. Members of the oligarchy saw in him the perfect solution to their predicament. If Roxas was innocent, who could be judged guilty? Roxas himself made no secret of his intention to bury the treason issue and to declare amnesty as quickly as possible in the event of his election. This cemented his ties with powerful elements in the ruling class who were known as collaborators. The conservative Osmeña was thrust into the personally awkward position of posing as the more progressive candidate in order to pick up support from guerrilla and anti-collaborationist forces.

Osmeña won the nomination of the Nacionalista Party, and under normal circumstances of pre-war one-party rule, this would have ensured his election. But Roxas immediately organized a rival—and inappropriately named—Liberal Party. Obliquely supported by the Americans, Roxas swept to victory. Economically his triumph ushered in a return to the pre-war status quo and politically it signalled a wave of counter-revolution against former guerrillas and left wing forces. Shortly after Roxas' election, and by the terms of the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act, the Philippines became an independent republic.

Given the degree of American intransigence on the question before the war, perhaps the most startling development was the reconstruction of the post-war sugar industry along pre-war lines. This was possible because of totally altered international market conditions; Cuban and us domestic sugar producers could not effectively lobby against Philippine producers because they themselves had not been able to keep up with the demand caused by wartime shortages. Prevailing high sugar prices also tipped the balance in favour of those who held that the Philippine market for us goods depended upon the continuation of production in the agricultural economy along pre-war lines. Although the reconstruction of the inefficient, non-competitive Philippine sugar industry (necessitating vast capital expenditures because almost all of the expensive milling facilities had been destroyed or removed by the Japanese) made minimal economic sense, its revival meant that once again it was dependent on us tariff preferences for its very existence. The consequent political leverage the Americans thus obtained no doubt counted for more in the Cold War era than the incidental extra expense paid by the American consumer for Philippine agricultural inefficiency.

The legislative framework for the 'rehabilitation' of the island sugar industry was the 1946 Philippine Trade Act, outlining economic relations between the us and the independent republic. The most commented upon part of the Trade Act was an infamous 'Parity' clause which gave us citizens equal rights under Philippine law in the exploitation of Philippine natural resources. The 'Parity' clause neces-

sitated an amendment to the Philippine Constitution, which Roxas dutifully rammed through Congress after first insuring its passage by summarily ousting several Huk-supported Congressmen. The 'Parity' clause was a clear index of the kind of client state the us was fashioning in the Philippines but it unfortunately obscured the more fundamental controls contained within the Act.

Of overriding importance was the standard guarantee of American willingness to finance and subsidize, via tariff allowances and quotas, the revived sugar industry in return for tariff concessions for American products in the Philippine market. In its essential features, the pre-war colonial economy was reconstructed by the 1946 Trade Act. In addition to the abrogation of control over import tariffs, the Philippine peso was pegged to the dollar at a fixed 2 to 1 ratio and the Philippine Government was prohibited from interfering with foreign exchange and the remittance of profits. The country was becoming, economically speaking, as much of a colony after 1946 as it was before the war. The us Embassy became the equal of the Presidential Palace as the seat of power in the Philippines.

Post-war American influence in the Philippines was not confined simply to economic matters. In international affairs, Manila regimes echoed—and at times exceeded—the harshest of American Cold War rhetoric.¹³ The us Defense Department more or less helped itself to long term leases on 25 military and naval bases in the islands. Two of these bases, Subic Bay Naval Base and the huge Clark Air Base, have since figured prominently in the Vietnam war and are a vital part of American Pacific strategy.

More importantly, the Philippine oligopoly was acutely aware of the power of the Left and felt a growing dependence on the us for protection against the increasing threat of agrarian revolt. As noted, the American military under MacArthur's direction had previously been prepared to disarm the *Hukbalabap* and smash the Huk infrastructure. Even when the Huks and the PKP were clearly willing to work within a reformist perspective, there was no real let up in the Government's campaign to eliminate the left as a possible threat. Although peasant demands were still only mildly reformist in nature, the threat of land reform was especially anathema to the *hacenderos* and this drove Roxas to unleash a series of 'mailed fist' campaigns against those guerrillas who had picked up their guns again in desperation.

The Huk Struggle

From 1945 until the end of the decade a twilight war was fought in Central Luzon. The policy of the PKP at this time did not include armed insurrection and its hope was that basic reforms could be realized by negotiating with the Roxas Administration. The reality of the

¹³ At the time of writing, the Philippines does not maintain diplomatic relations with any Communist government, although Marcos has made overtures to both the Soviet Union and China in recent years. It would not be surprising if diplomatic ties were established in the near future; such a gesture would be politically useful for the Marcos regime.

situation did not admit this kind of compromise however, as Roxas was determined to root out all vestiges of the guerrillas who had given the *hacendados* such a scare during the war. For three years the old Huks and the PKP remained continually on the defensive in the face of repeated Philippine Constabulary incursions.

In 1948 Roxas suddenly died and his successor, Vice President Elpidio Quirino, immediately called for negotiations with Huk leaders and amnesty for Huks who surrendered their weapons. In August 1948, negotiations ended abruptly after a vicious double-cross which resulted in the murder of several Huk envoys. Uncoordinated fighting and sporadic peasant resistance, resulting in renewed 'mailed fist' campaigns, continued for another year.

Presidential elections were scheduled for November 1949, and it was felt by many that the unpopular Quirino would be defeated by his Nacionalista Party opponent, Jose P. Laurel. PKP predilection for reform via electoral politics led the Huk leaders to detect ideological differences in the two men and to support Laurel's candidacy. In a normal bourgeois election, Quirino's personal unpopularity and rapidly deteriorating economic conditions would probably have been enough to doom his candidacy, but the election was anything but normal and massive voting 'irregularities' gave him a full term in office. Their hopes thus dashed, two months after the elections, the Huks (now known officially as the HMB—Army of Liberation) declared the existence of a 'revolutionary situation', and called for the overthrow of the Philippine Government by force of arms. The Huks had widespread popular support in Central Luzon but no overt 'liberated zone' in any true sense of the word. Moreover, Party leadership opted to maintain itself in Manila which proved to be a fatal mistake. Eschewing protracted warfare, the Huk leaders stated that victory could be attained within a relatively short period of time and set for themselves a two year timetable for the achievement of state power. This, too, proved to be a fatal miscalculation. As with their capitulation in 1947, so now the incorrect strategy of the PKP reflected the general strategy of the communist movement.

Successfully co-ordinated Huk raids in August 1950, led to plans for an even larger offensive in November. Quirino was so ruffled by growing Huk strength that he ordered his Presidential yacht kept constantly at the ready for a quick dash down the Pasig river into Manila Bay and exile. But Huk chances of success were ruined when, in October, the fortuitous discovery of underground Party headquarters in Manila led to the arrest of over 100 top Party leaders and the confiscation of Party files, organization material and funds. Although the Huk struggle continued for several more years the guerrillas never again recovered the momentum they once enjoyed.

In spite of these serious errors and miscalculations, the single greatest difficulty facing the Huks was the geographical one of expanding their base area from Central Luzon to other regions of Luzon and to other islands. Support for the Huk cause in Central Luzon was decimated, reflected years of political work by the Left, and was shaped to

some degree by the extremely polarized social and economic conditions there which were not prevalent to the same degree elsewhere. Concerted attempts to expand the Huk base from Central Luzon to Southern Luzon and the Visayas met with only temporary success.

American Intervention

To increase Huk difficulties, the us began to fund the Filipino counter-insurgency effort and to provide overall direction in collaboration with the Philippine Army. Previously the Americans had permitted the inefficient Philippine Constabulary (pc) to deal with the Huk situation, but changed conditions resulting from the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 and the advent of the Korean War in 1950 prompted the Americans to intervene with advisers and material. The cost of American participation in the suppression of the Huks eventually amounted to over \$1,000 million and the Philippine counter-insurgency effort of the early 1950s served as a laboratory for later American involvement in Vietnam.

us imperialism was particularly successful in grooming Ramon Magsaysay as an effective tool in the counter-insurgency effort. Magsaysay was a mechanic by profession, and he had commanded a pro-us guerrilla organization during the Second World War, so in two respects, his class background and his wartime activity, he stood in marked contrast to the Filipino oligarchy as a whole. Magsaysay rose swiftly to the position of Secretary of Defence in Quirino's Cabinet, a post which put him in charge of prosecuting the war against the Huks. He performed this task with a degree of efficiency not shared by many in the corrupt Quirino administration. His performance brought him to the attention of CIA Colonel Edward Lansdale who began to see in Magsaysay an effective alternative to Quirino. Lansdale was a former Madison Avenue advertising man and he began to use all his past experience to boost Magsaysay's image among the peasantry.

With the approach of the 1953 Presidential election, Magsaysay was encouraged to resign from the Quirino Cabinet and from the Liberal Party in order to gain the nomination of the opposition Nacionalistas. The move caused only perfunctory protest within NP circles and party-switching of this sort became in time a common Philippine political practice—Marcos being the most prominent recent example of the phenomenon. The practice also underscores the lack of any significant ideological distinction between the two parties, a condition which held true from 1946 until the presidential election in 1969. Both parties relied on regional bosses who mobilized dependent peasantries to support their clients in elections, and there was no significant regional variation in the power of the two machines.

Lansdale's public relations techniques and Magsaysay's own bluff personality seemed enough to insure his election over the unpopular Quirino. But the latter had adroitly stolen the 1949 election, and in order to ensure that history would not repeat itself, Magsaysay and the CIA organized a small army in the Zambales Mountains north-west of Manila. The CIA army was fully equipped with guns and tanks in

preparation for a *coup d'état* if Magsaysay lost. In the event, such precautions proved unnecessary, as Magsaysay won an easy victory.

The Huks by this time were thoroughly on the defensive. Most of the leading cadres were in jail; the few remaining operatives had been chased out of their peasant base areas into unpopulated mountain terrain where they were being mopped up. The Huks were also plagued by internal splits and capitulationist attitudes, symptomatic of a losing struggle of this kind. By early 1954 the movement had ceased to be a major threat to the Government although 'dissidence' and pockets of guerrilla resistance have become endemic features of the Central Luzon landscape down to the present. Lansdale moved on to Vietnam where he tried to repeat his Philippine success with Ngo Dinh Diem.¹⁴

The Economics of Neo-Colonialism

The 1946 Philippine Trade Act had a destructive effect on the economy largely because of the absence of any control on imports. American consumer goods flooded the Philippine market in the years immediately following the war, but the immediate impact of this assault was delayed because the simultaneous payment of war rehabilitation funds and other windfall payments made up the potential balance-of-payments deficit.¹⁵ By 1949 these distinct transitional payments had come to an end and the full implications of the lack of tariff protection against free US consumer goods imports became apparent. Philippine foreign exchange plummeted because imports could not be curbed; but the terms of the Trade Act there was no Philippine government authority to stem the tide. Export earning capacity was still limited due to the slow recovery of the sugar industry (pre-war levels of production were not achieved until 1953) and because of a disastrous slump in the price of coconut oil in 1948.

The economic crisis of 1949 was serious and in view of the growing threat from the left there was genuine fear in Manila and in Washington that the Quirino Government faced imminent collapse if measures were not quickly taken to rectify some of the more crippling features of the Trade Act. American policy planners were reluctant to give what must have been seen as an archetypal neo-colonial arrangement but the need for stability began to take precedence over the demands of American exporters and in 1949 President Truman reluctantly permitted the Philippine Government to impose import and exchange controls. The effect was similar to that of a tariff except that US exporters still preserved their advantage in the now-restricted Philippine market.

The imposition of controls redressed the balance-of-trade crisis but in other respects the Americans fought hard to preserve the basic features

¹⁴ For Lansdale's side of the story see his autobiography, Edward G. Lansdale *In the Midst of Wars*, New York, 1972.

¹⁵ Payment of Rehabilitation Funds had the overtones of a bribe. Although the US paid out \$620m in war damage claims, the release of these funds was contingent upon Filipino acceptance of the terms of the imposed Philippine Trade Act. Payments are not to be confused with 'aid'; they represented payments for actual damage caused largely by US bombing during the war.

of their economic hegemony. When awkward questions were raised in the Philippines concerning the onerous effect certain provisions of the Trade Act were having on the Philippine economy, the State Department tried to shift the blame back to the Filipinos, pointing out that archaic agricultural practices, high rates of land tenancy and resultant inefficiency were hampering full productive capacity and thwarting the 'modernization' of the agrarian economy. This was a disingenuous line for the Americans to take as they well knew that rural conditions were not the root cause of the post-war crisis. (Increased production of sugar, for example, would hardly have been of material benefit to the Philippines because, inefficient as the industry was after meeting the us quota, additional Philippine production would have been forced on the world market at a dumping price.) Nevertheless, the charges of agrarian rack-rent exploitation and inefficiency were demonstrably true; indeed such conditions had become endemic features of the rural landscape—largely as a result of pre-war American colonial policies. The American counter-attack thus ended serious debate within Philippine Government circles as Filipino politicians retreated from what they saw as a losing issue.

The period from 1949 was marked by a number of adjustments of some of the major excesses of the Trade Act, culminating in the 1954 Laurel-Langley Trade Agreement. The Agreement gave the Philippines slightly greater autonomy in controlling its import tariff and it re-scheduled the imposition of us duty on terms favourable to the Philippine sugar industry. American policy on the matter of sugar had now come full circle. In the 1930s determined efforts were made to terminate tariff concessions on Philippine sugar, but by the mid-1950s subsidizing of the 8-10 per cent of us consumption requirements supplied by the Philippines was seen as a politically useful concession, especially in the months following Dien Bien Phu.

The imposition of import controls in 1949 had an immediate salutary effect on the Philippine economy. The importation of consumer products fell sharply, replaced by locally manufactured products. During the decade of the 1950s and until 1962 when import and exchange controls were abolished, the Philippines experienced a mild boom in manufacturing and a relatively high growth rate in the industrial sector. Factory construction in the Manila area became especially conspicuous. In 1969 manufacturing accounted for 17.4 per cent of the Net Domestic Product and employed 11.5 per cent of the labour force. This led some bourgeois apologists to claim that the Philippines was pursuing a path of autonomous development based on a conscious policy of industrialization. This was doubly incorrect. First of all the industrialization was carried out in a haphazard manner: the 1949 measures were decided as a stopgap measure in Washington, and the majority of the industrial plants were subsidiaries of us capital, processing goods to circumvent the 1949 restrictions. Secondly, the argument assumed that economic growth and independence require a heavy industrial base, whereas some post-colonial countries have achieved these by relying on light industry, raw materials or primary products. The key to these goals is whether the local ruling class has control over the surplus generated and not whether there exists a heavy industrial base.

The Filipino ruling class benefited from the existing system and had no impulsion to break the dependent ties. The three main exports were lumber, sugar and copper which accounted in 1970 for \$221m, \$178m and \$199m out of a total of \$1,062m. These went to two main markets 44·1 per cent to the USA and 39·9 per cent to Japan, and these two states were also the main suppliers of the Philippines' imports. The rural ruling class was able to exploit these ties to develop its own position throughout the post-war period while maintaining the predominance of rural production. At the end of the 1960s 70 per cent of the population still lived in the rural areas and 56 per cent of the employed population worked in agriculture, forestry and fishing. The polarization of ownership patterns continued, with a steady rise in the number of share-croppers and landless labourers in those areas where capitalist production was most developed. It was the rural masses who bore the weight of this system and whose condition constantly worsened. By the middle 1960s an estimated 50 per cent of the land was owned by 0· per cent of the population: in the Pampanga area of central Luzon scene of the most intensive production of rice, 90 per cent of the land was worked by share-croppers or exploited tenants; in the main sugar growing area, northern Negros, 65 per cent of the land was so worked. By contrast in the less fertile and more mountainous parts of the country such as those of the southern islands, the rate fell to 10 per cent.¹⁶

The Marcos Years—Growing Economic Contradictions

Philippine economic difficulties deepened in the years of the Presidency of Ferdinand Marcos which began in 1965 and reached crisis proportions shortly after his unprecedented election to a second term of office in 1969 when he became the first Philippine President to succeed himself in office. Under Marcos the tranquil domestic situation altered: the bourgeoisie split for the first time in this century, and revived revolutionary movement began to attack from the left. The combination of economic crisis and political degeneration in the enforced Marcos to declare martial law in 1972.

The Philippine economy has traditionally been subject to all the vicissitudes which are the hallmark of semi-colonial dependent development, but four basic problems in particular can be isolated as the root causes of the present crisis. Each of these four has intensified under Marcos' rule and undermined the historical basis of the Philippine bourgeois system. These are, not necessarily in order of importance: increased foreign penetration and control over the national economy continuing dependence on exports of primary products and declining terms of trade; disruption of the internal economy and food supply as a consequence of the failure of 'miracle rice'; and wasteful capital spending for political ends.

The lifting of exchange controls in 1962 eliminated all restrictions on the outflow of capital, and foreign investors, now assured of unfettered profit remittance, began to take renewed interest in the Philippines as

¹⁶ See the Economist Intelligence Unit Annual Supplement on *The Philippines as Taiwan*, 1972, and Burley, *op. cit.* for details.

field of investment. The development of conditions favourable to foreign investors was theoretically designed to stimulate a flow of imperialist capital into the Philippine economy, thus (again in theory) nullifying the impact of lifting restrictions on capital outflow. The reality of the situation, however, was quite different. Renewed foreign (principally American) interest in the Philippines did not generate the expected inflow of foreign capital to any significant degree. (Capital outflow, repatriation of profits and remittances abroad exceeded overseas investment after 1962 by as much as 2½ to 1 according to some estimates.) Indeed, quite the reverse of the expected occurred. Foreign capitalists began to compete heavily on the Filipino money market for scarce credit. Because of their size and strength, their overseas connections and their generally greater degree of credit worthiness, foreign corporations put indigenous enterprise at a chronic disadvantage in the acquisition of loan capital. Within the space of a few years many of the more important but now capital starved Filipino corporations were taken over by subsidiaries of foreign firms.¹⁷ Foreign penetration of the Philippine economy and the unchecked outflow of capital led almost inevitably to a downward spiral of inflation, devaluation and external debt. The peso was twice sharply devalued in the space of eight years and the external debt grew from \$275m in 1962 to \$1,880m by 1970.¹⁸

The second problem facing the Philippine economy was the continued dependence on a small number of basic exports. The onerous features of primary production and commercial agriculture are certainly not unique to the Philippines. Nor are the problems inherent in 'enclave development' (e.g. mining and the extractive industries). The Philippine economy has been subject to these long-term aspects of imperialism, but in recent years a number of specific problems have arisen which have further hampered export expansion leading in turn to a critical trade balance situation. Trade deficits have been recorded every year since 1963, and reached a record \$302m in 1969.¹⁹ This problem has been seriously compounded by endemic technical smuggling: lack of foreign exchange controls has permitted a situation to develop where smuggling has reached enormous proportions, reaching the equivalent of one-third of total imports in recent years. Such a situation makes a mockery of official trade figures and contributes heavily to the loss of foreign exchange.²⁰

The unfavourable trade situation has no easy solution as it is rooted in the inherent inability to increase productivity and because of inelasticity of demand for the important Philippine exports. Timber, for example, became an increasingly important product in the 1960s and by 1969

¹⁷ Perhaps the most famous casualty of the credit squeeze was *Philco*, an indigenously owned refining corporation which was bought out by Gulf in 1964.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive analysis of recent foreign penetration of the Philippines, the reader is referred to 'Exchange Controls and National Capitalism: The Philippine Experience,' by Cheryl Payer which has appeared in the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* Vol. 3, No. 1 (1973). I am indebted to Dr Payer for making her manuscript available to me prior to publication.

¹⁹ J. B. Laurel, Jr. *Report on the National Economy*, Manila, Lyceum Press, Inc., 1971, p.5.

²⁰ Payer manuscript.

lumber exports accounted for nearly 30 per cent of total Philippine export earnings. But lumber exports had already tailed off to 23 per cent of total in 1971 due to rapacious and often illegal logging practices and the absence of any coherent reforestation programme. Further stagnation and decline for the industry is a certainty within the decade, not for lack of markets but because of the widespread destruction of the Philippine hardwood stands. Loggers are already being forced to penetrate previously inaccessible and economically marginal mountainous areas where production costs are high. The devastating July 1972 floods (the worst ever in Philippine history) have been blamed largely on the denuding of the rim area of the Central Luzon plain.

By 1970 minerals ranked as the second leading Philippine export due largely to the dramatic rise in copper production. Copper alone accounted for 19.7 per cent of export earnings, but copper prices had been subject to the same downward pressure which had played havoc with the Chilean economy. Moreover, Philippine copper deposits are not sizeable and extraction costs are high. Sugar and coconut products (17 and 19 per cent of exports in 1970 respectively) offer relatively more stable prospects for future earnings, but in the case of sugar there is the continued question of inefficiency and dependence on the US market. In 1974 the terms of the Laurel-Langley Treaty expire and Philippine sugar will no longer enjoy tariff concessions in the American market. The tariff question is no longer as important as it once was, as the termination of US imports from Cuba after 1960 has removed a most potent competitor and has given the Filipino producers a greater security in the US market. The Philippine position, however, is still totally dependent upon receipt of a quota in the US and the Marcos administration is apparently banking heavily on getting just that. Within the past few years the Philippine Government has invested in the construction of seven new sugar mills and six more are being planned, and it is very unlikely that Philippine sugar could be marketed anywhere but in the US. In 1970 Philippine sugar was being sold to the US at three times the price then prevailing on the world market rate.

The Failure of the Green Revolution

The third very difficult economic problem of the late 1960s and early 1970s has been the failure to date of the so called 'miracle' rice varieties to produce the expected breakthrough in domestic food production. The high yield rice varieties were originally developed at the Rockefeller Foundation's International Rice Research Institute near Manila in the mid-1960s and scientists there, working closely with 'agrobusiness' interests had high hopes of achieving a capitalist 'Great Leap Forward'.²¹ The Philippines seemed like an excellent proving ground; 1965 saw the importation of a record 569,000 tons of rice, and chronic deficit in the staple had been a feature of the island economy for nearly a century.

By 1967 preliminary evidence suggested that the 'Green Revolution'

²¹ The phrase is Marvin Harris's and the reader is referred to his excellent article 'How Green the Revolution,' in *Natural History*, June-July 1972.

was working. Widespread dissemination of the new seeds in 1966 and 1967 permitted the Philippines finally to achieve rice self-sufficiency in 1969. Marcos took full credit for what seemed indeed to be a remarkable transformation of the rural economy and campaigned for re-election in that year on the promise that 'never again' would the Republic have to import rice. The boast was premature. The basic problem with the 'miracle' grains, aside from the need for heavy capital investments in fertilizer and pesticides and strict control of irrigation (both of which worked to the disadvantage of the poor farmer), was the lack of resistance to epidemic plant disease such as tungro, leaf blight, stem rot and a host of others. Widespread planting of one or two strains was courting disaster—which in the case of the Philippines was quickly visited in the form of a tungro epidemic in 1971. While Rockefeller geneticists worked feverishly on developing disease-resistant strains, tungro swept Philippine rice fields resulting in a predicted 1972 deficit of over 800,000 tons, a new record.²² The future of the Green Revolution is not yet clear, but the roscate predictions of just a few years ago are rapidly being replaced by the spectre of food shortages and famine. 'For the peasants,' according to Harris, 'these seeds . . . are antimiracles, veritable seeds of destruction.'

The fourth problem facing the Philippine economy is probably the only one subject to short-term correction—although there is yet little evidence that such will be the case. Non-economic, political spending has been a feature of the Philippine political scene for many years. Election campaigns in particular have traditionally entailed the often wasteful expenditure of considerable sums of money. The greatest (and perhaps last) example of this tendency was Marcos' 1969 re-election campaign. In spite of a foreign exchange crisis, an adverse balance-of-payments situation, rampant inflation and other economic difficulties, Marcos borrowed heavily, securing short-term, high-interest loans to initiate a whole series of highly visible capital improvements (road building and the like) in order to impress the electorate and win votes. Marcos was able to keep his financial house-of-cards intact until just after the November 1969 election but within months of his re-election he was forced to 'float' (i.e. sharply devalue) the peso, in spite of his election pledge not to do so. As short-term loans became due, further short-term credits were—with increasing difficulty—secured. One of the most pressing problems for the past two years has been to persuade creditors to reschedule debt repayment. Neither the Government nor the creditors really have any choice in the matter; in 1971 debt servicing (amortization and interest) grew to 38 per cent of export earnings.²³

Left-wing Opposition: Students and the NPA

The growing economic crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s undermined the economic base of the Marcos regime while the actual moment of the break with bourgeois democracy owed more to political

²² Edward Khuniala, 'The Greatest Rice Importation,' *Philippine Free Press*, 18 Dec. 1971. The prediction was made before the devastating July 1972 floods.

²³ 'The Philippines: Economic Data,' unpublished economic data released by the Philippine Embassy, London, 9 November 1972.

developments than to economic deterioration *per se*. Since his re-election in 1969 political battle lines have been drawn along increasingly pro and anti Marcos lines. Left opposition to his administration has been augmented by growing centrist and bourgeois nationalist elements; the latter development was of no small importance as it represented the first serious split in ruling class solidarity in this century. Nationalism, too, was a new development: the Filipino bourgeoisie has traditionally been characterized by expatriate attitudes and nationalism has heretofore never been a particularly strong force in orthodox Philippine politics.²⁴

From 1965 onward, the left grew to significant proportions especially among Manila's large student population. Unlike Latin America and other countries, student activism had never been an important part of the Philippine political situation, but a series of events in 1965-66 sparked a movement which has grown rapidly in the years since. Anti-American popular sentiments were aroused when an American soldier shot and killed a Filipino boy on the perimeter of Clark Air Base. Such killings had become commonplace in post-war years, but in this instance a particularly callous remark—the GI said he mistook the boy for a 'wild boar'—coupled with the lack of Philippine jurisdiction over crimes committed on the base (the American went unpunished) resulted in a controversy which lasted for some months. The class caused considerable adverse comment about the bases in particular and relations with the US in general.

The Vietnam war was another catalyst for the Philippine left. The war became an issue in Philippine politics when, prior to the 1965 election Marcos pledged not to send Filipino troops to the Vietnam theatre; this promise was quickly broken when some 2,000 'Philcag' troops were dispatched to aid the Saigon regime at American request. In addition, a number of student visits to China at this time were highly publicized, and the absence of garbage, beggars and starving children in the streets of Peking was a sharp and widely commented upon contrast to conditions in Manila.

The outstanding weaknesses of the left in recent years have been lack of unity, a tendency to look beyond the Philippines for ideological direction and an inadequately organised urban base. By 1969 ideological divisions led to the creation of a Maoist *Communist Party of the Philippines* (*Marxist-Leninist-Mao-Tse Tung Thought*) under the leadership of a young ex-University lecturer Jose Ma. Sison. The CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, advocated the creation of a guerrilla zone in the rural area and began to engage in armed struggle, first in the old Huk strongholds in Central Luzon, later in the rugged mountains of Isabela province in North-eastern Luzon and elsewhere. The old PNP, often, but somewhat inaccurately labelled 'pro-Soviet' continues very much in existence led mainly by former Huk cadres. The past few years have been witness to bitter factional fighting between the two organizations, mostly over the relative merits of Soviet and Chinese

²⁴ In the 1950s for example, Senator Claro M. Recto fought a particularly lonely battle for nationalist politics, described in the excellent biography—*The Making of a Filipino* by Renato Constantino, Manila, 1970.

foreign policy and over the tactical problems of armed struggle, which both parties see as necessary in the present context. Frequently the debate has centred on individuals and degenerated into personal attacks, wilful misrepresentation and the trading of accusations of alleged CIA complicity. The prospects of left unity at the present time appear slim, although common opposition to Marcos may yet emerge as a unifying factor. The foreign model that has dominated both parties is that of China. Both analyse the contemporary Philippines in terms of the analysis evolved during the Chinese revolution and see it as semi-colonial and semi-feudal. This has led them to bypass the probably more apposite discussions that have taken place in Latin America where the forms of imperialist exploitation and the problems of revolutionary strategy bear resemblances to the Philippines. A broadening of their political perspectives would provide the Filipino left with a greater theoretical and political arsenal on the basis of which they could evolve an independent analysis and strategy for their own liberation movement.

The Greater Threat: a Bourgeois Opposition

In spite of the split, the growth of the left was a formidable new development—certainly conditions in 1972 were a far cry from the somnolence of a decade previously. Indeed, in the 23 September speech outlining his reasons for declaring martial law, Marcos was able to focus almost exclusively on the growing strength of the NPA. The Administration had reason to fear the rise of the left generally and of the NPA in particular. Yet, while this undoubtedly worried Marcos, he over-emphasized it in order to hide his paramount concern.

Until the late 1960s the Philippine oligarchy had been remarkable in its homogeneity as a class. Even during periods of great stress, such as the Philippine-American war and even more certainly during and directly after the Second World War, the Philippine ruling class has been largely free of damaging factionalism: the basis of oligarchic strength has always been ideological solidarity and mutuality of class interests. By the beginning of Marcos' second term, however, oligarchic unity had begun to crumble, and this was expressed in growing personal mistrust of Marcos. Although Marcos is an extremely wealthy man—his critics charge that there is no limit to his personal avarice—he was born close to but not of the oligarchy and he does not appear to enjoy full membership in 'The Club'. His considerable wealth, it should be noted, has been relatively recently acquired, the result of his willingness to exploit his office for personal gain.

Marcos' accretion of power and his lack of commitment to the preservation of harmonious oligarchic rule has led to bourgeois retaliation. Utilizing the considerable means available to them, the opposition oligarchs set the media and especially the Manila Press against Marcos, exposing corruption within his administration and his personal financial chicanery. More importantly, the oligarchs, via the media, began to attack him on an extremely volatile issue when they began to question his commitment to the basic principles of Philippine nationalism. Such a move was a considerable *volte face* for ruling-class elements whose own *comprador* backgrounds were notorious. Raising such an issue was fraught with danger to themselves and was clearly

not a step taken lightly. Nevertheless, progressive and nationalist writers who had spent years in the political wilderness suddenly found themselves with media outlets which they used to good advantage both to attack Marcos and to promote their own critical political ideas. Borrowing generously from the left's critique of the administration, the bourgeois opposition to Marcos grew and took on a nationalist coloration which increasingly put him on the defensive. The leader of this bourgeois opposition was Benigno Aquino, the most likely presidential candidate for the 1973 elections. While Aquino pretended to favour the left, his political position was in essence little different from that of Marcos.

The imposition of martial law came as no surprise to political activists who had long expected such a move. Marcos himself made no secret of his impatience with his many critics and had been laying the groundwork for his attack over several years by beefing up the army with officers personally loyal to him. Martial law served two immediate purposes for Marcos. It permitted him to unleash the army against the urban-based left without concern for the stipulations of constitutional law and it permitted him to silence centrist opposition to his administration. The measures also allowed him a freer hand in dealing with the simmering guerrilla war in Isabela and in Mindanao where Moslen resistance has flared once again. The possibilities of Marcos defeating rural opposition were however limited: despite increases in their strength the Philippine armed forces were relatively small for a country of 40 millions. In 1972 the army was estimated at 16,000 backed by a navy of 6,000 and an air force of 9,000. In addition there were 23,000 members of the Philippine Constabulary, a counter-insurgency force.

American reaction to the turn of events has been guarded. Marcos has been trying hard to win US support for his regime and a number of recent moves are clearly aimed at proving to Washington that he is the man to back. For example, a Philippine Supreme Court decision in August 1972 threatened a number of special rights enjoyed by American investors in the Philippines (including 'Parity' rights). This development panicked the American business community in Manila, largely because the decision was seen as leading to further moves of this kind. Immediately after martial law Marcos nullified the ruling and gave other assurances to foreign capital which could only be welcomed by the US. Marcos also seems determined to implement (capitalist) land reform. This is something the US has long advocated, both to defuse a potentially revolutionary situation in the hinterland and because the development of small capitalist farmers and rural co-operatives will be a boon for US fertilizer and farm equipment interests. (Esso now has more than 400 'agro-service centres' throughout the Philippines.) Vigorous attacks on the guerrilla war must also please the uneasy Pentagon. Nevertheless, it seems fairly clear that the Nixon administration is hesitant to commit itself to Marcos at the present time. Imelda Marcos went to some lengths to inveigle an invitation to Nixon's inauguration but despite 'just happening' to be in Washington on 20 January the suggestion was not forthcoming.²⁵ Vice-president Spiro Agnew

²⁵ *International Herald Tribune*, 16 February 1973.

recent tour of South-east Asian countries to explain the Vietnam peace agreements did not originally include the Philippines—a curious omission if not intended as a rebuff. The reasons for America's attitude are fairly clear: it knows of Marcos's vast unpopularity and of his alienation of a large portion of the oligarchy and it wants to avoid close identification with him in a fluid situation. The Americans fear Marcos for many of the same reasons that have alienated him from the elite in his own country. His means of wielding power, his lack of ideological principles and his capacity to change political direction if it serves his personal ambition are well known. A cautious game is now being played. Given his political intelligence it is quite possible that Marcos may adopt a 'nationalist' stance and pose as a champion of anti-imperialist interests in order to win support from the Filipino masses. Despite the overall economic constraints, he has a definite political room for manoeuvre along these lines.

The guerrilla situation is very difficult to assess at the present time, due to press censorship and news blackout. The estimated 2,000 NPA guerrillas in Isabela are bearing the full brunt of a sophisticated counter-insurgency effort led by American-trained officers and equipped with the latest Vietnam war surplus *matériel*. Moreover, whatever political base the guerrillas managed to create prior to the imposition of martial law is now being systematically relocated. (Up to 50,000 peasants were moved out of mountain villages in Isabela in late September.) How peasants will react to such military heavy-handedness is not yet clear but remains a critical question. NPA activity is not limited to Isabela, nor is the NPA the only active or potential armed force in opposition to the Marcos regime. The old PKP Huks, for example, have always maintained their traditional base areas and their armed units in Central Luzon. After the imposition of martial law the PKP also called for the armed overthrow of the Marcos regime.

The guerrilla situation in Mindanao is considerably more complex. Before martial law, rising tensions between Moslems and migrants from the North led on occasion to open and bloody warfare. Moslem identification with the national government has always been tenuous and exponents of Moslem separatism have traditionally had a following. Recent government incursions have provoked sharp Moslem resistance and heavy fighting has recently taken place. Although Marcos has endeavoured to link the fighting in the South to NPA activity in the North, there does not appear to be much evidence to support this. The situation in Mindanao could indeed cause problems for the left, and its reaction to growing Moslem separatism is not yet clear. Islamic resistance also raises a host of thorny problems for Marcos in his relations with Islamic neighbours to the South, Indonesia and Malaysia. The situation in the South differs from Isabela in two important respects. The close knit Moslem community affords the guerrillas a ready-made popular base which the Philippine government cannot break. In over 400 years the Philippine Moslems have never surrendered to outside authority and are unlikely to start doing so now. Military action against them will merely stiffen resolve to resist. The ideological direction of the Moslem movement remains a major question mark; whether Moslem resistance aims merely to preserve archaic traditions or whether

progressive ideas will become an important part of the movement is the critical unknown factor.

Opportunity for the Left

At least initially Marcos has been able to consolidate his power and even win a short-term popularity by demagogic manoeuvres. But the collapse of bourgeois democracy in the Philippines marks an important development in the configuration of East Asia as a whole. Long resistant to the political and economic forces that undermined such bourgeois institutions in other colonial countries, the Philippines seemed able to pursue an insulated and unchallenged pro-imperialist evolution. Whatever the incidence of private armies the Philippine archipelago served as a politically tranquil base for US imperialism. Now the attack by Marcos on his bourgeois rivals has brought this period to an end for the divided revolutionaries it means both that Marcos can attack with greater virulence than before and that they can present themselves more effectively as the only force that can resolve the growing contradictions inherent in Philippine society. The quarrelling factions of the bourgeoisie have shown their inability either to sustain or break the previously dependent economic ties to the US. Marcos' declaration of martial law has ended the political regime on which the bourgeoisie had previously relied. The Philippines is thus entering a situation of immense danger and opportunity, one where a vanguard party, basing itself on the exploited masses, and learning from the lessons of the past can seize the initiative.

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See inside back cover

In the first essay we publish in this issue of the review, Göran Therborn explores the complex relationship between the formation of the European working-class and the birth of Marxism. The exact nature of the bond between socialist theory and proletarian practice has traditionally been one of the most central yet elusive problems of historical materialism. The pattern of pauses, blockages and displacements that has characterized the development of Marxism in this century has given rise to frequent confusion among socialist militants, whether reflecting on the past or confronting the daily tasks of the present. Therborn's article returns to the biographical starting-point of Marx and Engels themselves, and shows with rare precision and eloquence that the absolute material precondition for the appearance of a scientific socialism was the international upsurge of the industrial working-class in the 1840's. Proletarian class struggle preceded revolutionary socialist theory, and rendered possible its momentous emergence—separating it forever from the bourgeois discipline of sociology which has counterpointed and contested it ever since. While Therborn demonstrates what Marx and Engels needed to learn from the working-class, Gareth Stedman Jones focuses in a complementary study on the later intellectual difficulties of developing the gains of the scientific revolution that had been accomplished by Marx and Engels, in the period after 'Capital'. Once again, it was the gravitational pressure of the working-class—now assembled in the new social-democratic parties of the Second International—which induced an important mutation in socialist theory: the attempt by the later Engels to systematize a general philosophy of dialectical materialism by a new usage of the heritage of Hegel. The ambiguities and contradictions of this venture, which were to arouse so much subsequent controversy, provide a necessary reminder of the unfinished and incomplete character of the joint work of the founders of historical materialism.

The rise and fall of the American 'new left' has been one of the most meteoric phenomena in Western politics of recent years. In its birth career, the US New Left illuminated the crisis of capitalist social relations over a wide range of domains. Many novel questions were posed perhaps for the first time ever as objects of urgent and immediate social practice: the functions and forms of racism, the oppression of women, the significance of youth as a cultural category, the contradictions of the educational and media systems, the role of the bourgeois family. At the same time, however, little commensurate political advance was achieved in the turbulent years 1964-70. Russell Jacoby, a militant in the US movement, now provides a caustic and aphoristic critique of many aspects of the ideology of the North American New Left. His chief target is the pervasive subjectivism which characterized its politics. The fundamental social determinant of this volatility and instability was, of course, the distance of the New Left from the American working-class—a divorce whose causes in their turn were profoundly rooted in the history of the US social formation as a whole, since the Second World War. The temporary period of reflux in the United States now makes it more necessary than ever to correct the deficiencies of the past by rigorous and objective studies, not only of the US economy, but also of its class structure and political system, and patient and practical linkage with the life of the national proletariat.

In a remarkable survey Premen Addy and Ibne Azad explore the complex relationship between religion and enlightenment, communalism and class struggle, social oppression and national liberation in the history of Bengal. They argue that the intellectual and political traditions forged in and against the colonial social formation help to explain both the religious deformation of Indian nationalism and the belated emergence of secular politics. A notable feature of this study is its iconoclastic approach to the mythology of the national movement and its unsparing analysis of the failure of the Left to seize the opportunities presented to it by the contradictions of bourgeois nationalism.

The Working Class and the Birth of Marxism

The theory of historical materialism makes it possible to situate Marxism itself—just as much as market economics or normative sociology—in relation to capitalist development and the bourgeois revolution. Historical materialism emerged in the second half of the 1840s, in the heartlands of industrial capitalism. Its birthplaces were the major economic centres of Brussels, London and Manchester, and Paris—storm centre of the bourgeois revolutions of 1789 and 1830. It is true, of course, that Marx and Engels themselves were Germans, and the German determination of Marxism cannot be ignored. But it was only outside Germany that the new theory could come into being. All but one of the formative works of historical materialism were written outside Germany, the sole exception being Engels's study of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, the product of a 21-month stay in Manchester. After *The Holy Family*, the first product of the collaboration between Marx and Engels, written in Paris but published in Frankfurt in 1845, it was not until 1859, with the appearance of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, that a crucial work of historical

materialism was even published in Germany. *The German Ideology* found no publisher; Marx wrote *The Poverty of Philosophy* in French and had it published in Paris and Brussels; Engels's *Principles of Communism* were not sent for publication, the *Communist Manifesto* appeared in London, and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* was written for a German-American periodical published in New York.

Germany and Europe

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It was in Paris and Manchester respectively that Marx and Engels underwent the decisive experiences that led them to break with Left Hegelian philosophy and radical-liberal politics.¹ The latest surviving text in which Marx still distances himself from communism is a letter written to Arnold Ruge in September 1843, shortly before Marx left Germany for Paris.² In Paris he began to study political economy and the class struggles of the French Revolution, and it was in Paris, too, that he came into contact with revolutionary workers from the French and German secret communist societies. 'When, in the spring of 1845, we met again in Brussels', Engels wrote 40 years later, 'Marx had already fully developed his materialist theory of history in its main features.' Of his own experience, Engels wrote: 'While I was in Manchester, it was tangibly brought home to me that the economic facts . . . are, at least in the modern world, a decisive historical force; that they form the basis of the origination of the present-day class antagonisms; that these class antagonisms, in the countries where they have become fully developed . . . are in their turn the basis of the formation of political parties and party struggles, and thus of all political history.'³ Engels studied political economy in England. In London in the spring of 1843 he came to know 'the first revolutionary proletarians whom I met',⁴ the leaders of the League of the Just—a clandestine society of German artisans. Somewhat later Engels made contact with the Chartists.

Their experience of the most advanced bourgeois societies left a decisive and lasting imprint upon the whole theoretical and political oeuvre of Marx and Engels. The focus on the development of the productive forces, the interest in technology, the importance attached to abstract economic theory, the clear distinction between the wage earning proletariat and the socially and historically undifferentiated category of the poor,⁵ the emphasis on the revolutionary role of the

¹ The following discussion of the formative experiences of Marx and Engels is based, firstly, on their own writings; and secondly, on their standard biographies—above all, Auguste Cornu's *Karl Marx et Friedrich Engels* (Paris 1955–70), which covers in four volumes the period up to and including *The German Ideology*.

² L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat (eds.), *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, pp. 212–13.

³ 'On the History of the Communist League', Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* [one volume edition], London, 1968, p. 436. (Abbreviated as *MSW*.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

⁵ This distinction is pointed to by Marx in 'Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction', Easton and Guddat, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–3, and more fully developed by Engels in his contribution to what was to become the *Communist Manifesto*, the *Principles of Communism*.

bourgeoisie,⁶ the categorical refusal to make an unholy alliance with semi-feudal forces against the immediate exploiter of the proletariat, the ruthless hostility towards every form of romanticism, sentimentality and mysticism—all these well-known features of Marxism bear witness to its relationship to the Enlightenment, the Great French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.

Compared to England and France, Germany in the first half of the 19th century was both economically and politically a backward country. Industrial capitalism was in its infancy, and pre-bourgeois strata held power in the patchwork of petty states into which Germany was divided. In such a country historical materialism could not have materialized. The 'German ideology' was philosophical speculation—about freedom, reason, man, praxis, alienation, criticism, love, socialism—with no place in it for exploitation, revolutionary class struggle or a scientific theory of history. It is notable in this connection, on the other hand, that both Marx and Engels came from the most developed part of Germany, the Rhineland. Annexed to France from 1797 to 1814, the Rhineland had been deeply affected by the French Revolution. Progressive Germans, including the young Hegel,⁷ had warmly supported French rule, and Marx's father, too, was a franco-phil liberal. The Engels family, though pietist and reactionary in politics, belonged in another capacity to the most advanced section of German society. Friedrich Engels senior was a successful merchant-industrialist, whose firm had branches both in Germany and Manchester.

In the distinction that Engels drew in 1847, his family belonged to the bourgeoisie, 'which now rules in the civilized countries', and represents 'world trade, the exchange of products of all zones, finance, and large-scale industry based on machinery—not to the miserable *Kleinbürger* (petty bourgeoisie) who represented 'internal and coastal trade, handicraft production and manufacture based on handicraft', and who as the junior partner of the nobility were a conservative force, sharing the blame for German backwardness.⁸ It was the existence of a Manchester branch of the firm Ermen and Engels that took Engels to England.

The Sense of Theory

However, Engels later said that 'the German working-class movement

⁶ According to Ryazanov (*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, London 1927, pp. 92 ff), Marx and Engels even overemphasized the revolutionary potential of the bourgeois democrats in the German revolution of 1848, though they soon rectified this error. See 'The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution' and 'Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League (March 1850)' in Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848* (Penguin 1973 forthcoming). For Marx's attack on Lassalle for his overtures to German semi-feudal forces, see Marx's letters to Kugelmann of 23 February 1865 and to Schweitzer of 13 October 1868, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow 1965).

⁷ Georg Lukács, *Der junge Hegel*, Berlin 1954, Ch. 1.

⁸ 'The Status Quo in Germany', Marx Engels Werke, Berlin 1956-64, Vol. 4, pp. 44-5. (Abbreviated to MEW.)

is the inheritor of German classical philosophy.⁹ He even claimed while Marx was still at his side, that 'without German philosophy particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism—the only scientific socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being'.¹⁰ We are not so much concerned here with the strictly theoretical relationship between Hegelian philosophy and historical materialism but rather with the social and historical situation of the latter, and this is also Engels's concern in the text from which we have just quoted. Engels's argument there is that German workers have an 'important advantage' over those of the rest of Europe in that 'they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe, and have retained *the sense of theory* which the so-called "educated" classes of Germany have almost completely lost . . . What an incalculable advantage this is may be seen on the one hand, from the indifference to theory which is one of the main reasons why the English working-class movement crawls along so slowly . . . on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism in its original form among the French and Belgians, and in the form further caricatured by Bakunin among the Spaniards and Italians.'¹¹ (Engels wrote this in 1874, shortly after the split in the First International.)

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The 'sense of theory', that is what Engels has in mind in referring to 'German philosophy', and this point is further elaborated in his *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1886), already cited above. 'With the Revolution of 1848, "educated" Germany said farewell to theory and went over to the field of practice . . . But to the same degree that speculation abandoned the philosopher's study in order to set up its temple in the Stock Exchange, educated Germany lost the great aptitude for theory which had been the glory of Germany in the days of its deepest political humiliation—the aptitude for purely scientific investigation, irrespective of whether the result obtained was practically applicable or not . . . in the sphere of the historical sciences, philosophy included, the old fearless zeal for theory has now disappeared completely, along with classical philosophy. Inane eclecticism and an anxious concern for career and income descending to the most vulgar job-hunting, occupy its place . . . Only among the working class does the German aptitude for theory remain unimpaired . . . Here there is no concern for careers, for profit-making or for gracious patronage from above.'¹²

The Young Hegellians as an Intelligentsia

But between the 'sense of theory' and the actual working class there had to be a mediation and a mediator, and in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels refer explicitly to the mediating role of the left-wing Hegelian intelligentsia, in particular the 'true socialists' of that day. 'The formation of this hybrid sect and the attempt to reconcile communism with the ideas prevailing at the time were necessary consequences of the actually existing conditions in Germany.' They see it also as

⁹ 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy', MGSW, p. 622.

¹⁰ 'Preface to *The Peasant War in Germany*', MGSW, p. 246.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 245–6; italics added.

¹² MGSW, p. 621.

matter of historical necessity that some of these German philosophers and their 'disciples' (*Philosophenschüler*) crossed the threshold to the communist position whereas 'others, unable to extricate themselves from this ideology, should go on preaching true socialism to the bitter end'.¹³ In the early perspective of *The German Ideology*, however, one important element is missing, which was so obvious to the later Engels, namely that the scientific socialism of the former Left Hegelians Engels and Marx was the only one 'that has ever existed'. In other words, the left-wing German intelligentsia of 1843-5, despite its speculative verbosity and distorted ideology, contributed something positive to the formation of historical materialism.

It contributed two things, in an explosive combination. One was a dedication to abstract theory and solid scholarship. The Young Hegelians were the proud heirs of the monumental encyclopaedic system of Hegel and, beyond Hegel, of the whole German idealist tradition founded by Kant. Their crucial works of biblical criticism—David Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (1835), the starting-point of Left Hegelianism, and Bruno Bauer's *Critique of the Synoptic Gospels*—were landmarks of scholarship. Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* is no mere anti-religious pamphlet but a learned and profound investigation into what might today be called the psychology of religion.¹⁴

This scholarly devotion was, of course, a product of the German university culture of the early 19th century. The first centre of Young Hegelianism was the informal 'Doctor's Club' at the University of Berlin, of which the young Karl Marx was a highly regarded member. But if it was produced within the university, it could not rest within its confines, and this is the second element of the explosive combination: Left Hegelianism was not borne by established academicians but by a radical, alienated intelligentsia of 'free'—in other words, insecure and often harassed—publicists. The Young or Left Hegelians of the early 1840s had not compromised their ideas for the sake of their careers. On the contrary, Feuerbach's academic career had been stopped short in the mid 1830s because of a heretical theological text. Strauss was driven from his chair in Zürich in 1839. In the same year Bruno Bauer had to move from Berlin to Bonn, and at the beginning of 1842 he was thrown out of the university there, which led Marx to give up his own academic plans. Another of Marx's closest friends, Rutenberg, later editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, had also been dismissed from his teaching job.

An intelligentsia of the intellectual and social calibre of the Young Hegelians had no contemporary equivalent—scholarly yet non-academic, socially alienated yet non-bohemian. In these respects it resembles rather the 20th-century radical intelligentsias of Weimar Germany or post-war Paris. This Young Hegelian intelligentsia was, I would suggest, a crucially important *social* component in the formation of Marx, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Engels—not just an

¹³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, London 1965, p. 503.

¹⁴ I have borrowed this characterization from Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, Ann Arbor 1966, p. 243.

ideological component, as even their best biographers tend to suggest. The importance of a developed intelligentsia as a milieu for the creation of social theory is also apparent in the case of bourgeois sociology. The differences between such intelligentsias should, however, be emphasized. Classical sociology in Europe, as well as the neo-classical sociology of the 1930s in North America, arose in a solid and secure academic milieu with access, if at a certain distance, to the highest bourgeois society of wealth and power. But if alienated and persecuted the Young Hegelians were equally removed, on the other hand, from the entourage of Comte and Saint-Simon, a coterie of bohemian dilettanti.

The Eruption of the Working Class

The decisive difference in the social situation of Marxism, however, compared to either academic sociology today or to currents such as the Frankfurt School was, of course, the union between its founders and the revolutionary workers' movement. The earliest intellectual interests of both Marx and Engels were the same as those of many left-wing *Kulturkritiker* of the 20th century—philosophy, poetry, journalism, belles lettres in general. But although both Marx and Engels kept and nourished these cultural interests, what they created was neither philosophy of praxis nor of alienation—to cite two popular themes of *marxist* cultural criticism—but 'the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat',¹⁵ concentrating by necessity on the 'critique of political economy'. Moreover, as they say in the *Communist Manifesto*, their theoretical conclusions 'express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historic movement going on under our very eyes.'¹⁶ It is to this historical movement going on under the eyes of Marx and Engels in the early 1840s that we must now turn.

The political conjuncture which Marx and Engels faced in the late 1830s and early 1840s combined three important moments. Firstly, in the background, was the bourgeois revolution—the Great French Revolution, whose light still illuminated Europe, but also the French July revolution of 1830 and the English parliamentary reform of 1832; both significant victories of the industrial bourgeoisie that broke the reign of post-Napoleonic reaction. Secondly, against this background the abortive bourgeois revolution in Germany stood out as a scandal. The pious hopes of liberal bourgeois and Young Hegelians that the new Prussian king, Frederick William IV, would effect a revolution from above, were stifled in the winter of 1842–3 by a wave of press censorship and academic dismissals, while democratic intellectuals were rapidly radicalized, one way or the other. Thirdly, this was also the period in which the working-class movement made its decisive appearance. In England it was the time of Chartism, the first proletarian movement in history to reach the level of sustained nationwide organization. In France, 1831 saw the first proletarian insurrection, b

¹⁵ F. Engels, *Principles of Communism*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *MECW*, pp. 46–7.

✓ the Lyons silkworkers. Though crushed, it was soon followed by another rising, and a working-class movement established itself in France too. With the revolt of the Silesian weavers in 1844, the German proletariat made its own entrance on to the political stage. In short, the formative period of scientific socialism was precisely that in which the proletariat of the major European nations raised its coarse and urgent voice.

To the German philosophers, heirs of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the petty bureaucratic and feudal regimes in Germany were disgusting, and the German bourgeoisie effete and cowardly. But the condition of the workers in those countries where a strong and self-conscious bourgeoisie ruled was terrible too, as Marx and Engels were to learn at first hand in Paris and Manchester. This historical conjunction of a combative, atrociously exploited proletariat ✓ and an abortive bourgeois revolution was to prove an explosive revolutionary combination in Russia in the early 20th century. In the 1840s it was the crucial experience that pushed two German intellectuals in their twenties out on the road to a new scientific theory of // society, and to the forging of a deadly theoretical weapon against the bourgeoisie. Since the union of historical materialist theory and the // working-class movement is the crux of Marxism, both in its own eyes and in the actual historical role it has played in the past and plays today, we must go somewhat further into this relationship.

Kautsky's Traditional Formula

There is a famous passage in Karl Kautsky, the leading theorist of classical Social Democracy, defining the role of the intelligentsia in forming socialist consciousness among the proletariat—still famous today because Lenin based himself on it in *What is to be Done?*, his polemic against the anti-theoretical Russian reformists.¹⁷ Lenin and Kautsky were, of course, right—from the Marxist point of view—to emphasize the necessity of rigorous scientific theory and the inadequacy of spontaneous, untheoretical working-class consciousness. It is plain, ✓ however, that two decisive elements are missing in Kautsky's formulations. Firstly, Kautsky speaks of a *bourgeois intelligentsia* (in italics) as the vehicle of science, but the Young Hegelians—especially after the betrayal they experienced from the bourgeois liberals in the face of Prussian repression—were not simply a bourgeois intelligentsia. ✓ Socially, in the strategic years of 1842 to 1845, they were a *declassé* and radicalized section of the petty bourgeoisie. Secondly, and far more importantly, Kautsky is completely silent on the subject of what the // founders of scientific socialism *learned* from the working class. To

¹⁷ Lenin was soon to qualify, both in words and deed, this appeal to Kautsky. See, for example, his 'Preface to the Collection *Twelve Years*', *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 101–8. In an article of 1914 Lenin vehemently attacked Trotsky for saying that 'the pre-revolutionary [i.e. pre-1905] Social-Democratic Party in our country . . . was an organization of the Marxist intelligentsia, which led the awakening working-class'. Lenin called this 'the old liberal and liquidationist tune', pointed to the role of the 1895–6 strikes and asked indignantly whether 'the intelligentsia *led* the working-class . . . in these strikes, in this economic and non-economic agitation.' (Lenin's emphasis.) 'Disruption of Unity,' *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 343.

Kautsky the communication is one-way only: 'It was in the minds of individual members of this stratum [the bourgeois intelligentsia] that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done.'¹⁸ We have already stressed the deeply significant fact that the rise of proletarian class struggle *preceded* the upheaval in the minds of certain Young Hegelians. The founders of scientific socialism had to learn two things from the proletariat. First of all, they had to learn the concrete materiality of the real social world, beyond all problems of theology or the rational state. Secondly, they had to learn the class struggle, learn to see the proletariat not just as the most suffering class—as did the utopian socialists—but to discover 'the proud, threatening and revolutionary proletariat'.¹⁹ The *Communist Manifesto* states this condition very clearly in its negative form: 'The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes socialists of this kind [utopian socialists] to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms.'²⁰

The Political Itinerary of Engels

Engels, the rebellious son of a manufacturer, discovered the wretched social conditions of the proletariat very early. In 1839, at the age of eighteen, he wrote 'Letters from Wuppertal' (his home district) for a liberal literary journal in Hamburg, pointing to the misery of the workers and their families and to the 'capacious consciences' of the manufacturers. At that time, however, he was still under the sway of pietism and religious mysticism.²¹ It was only after his arrival in England, in the autumn of 1842, that Engels could conclude—in a series of articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung*, at that time edited by Marx—that a violent revolution was necessary to improve the material situation of the English proletariat, and that a social revolution was 'a certainty for England'.²² But that was only the first lesson. A year later Engels wrote a survey of the socialist movement on the Continent for the Owenist *New Moral World* in which he shows himself still firmly a Young Hegelian. He points to the 'philosophical communism in Germany' as a movement on a par with the English and French working-class movements. The Young Hegelians are 'our party', and Engels mentions Moses Hess, Arnold Ruge, Georg Herwegh, Marx and himself as representatives of the communist development of the Young Hegelian. To Engels it is strange only to the English—and not to himself—that 'a party which aims at the destruction of private property is chiefly made up by those who have property; and yet this is the case in Germany. We can recruit our ranks from those classes only which have enjoyed a pretty good education, that is, from the universities and from the commercial classes; and in either we have not hitherto met with

¹⁸ Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 383-4.

¹⁹ 'German Socialism in Verse and Prose', MEW 4, p. 207.

²⁰ MEW 4, p. 60.

²¹ 'Letters from Wuppertal', MEW 1, pp. 413-32.

²² 'Domestic Crises', MEW 1, p. 460.

any considerable difficulty.²³ It is quite without irony that Engels, having returned from England, describes his agitation in Wuppertal to his friend Marx, in a letter of February 1845. 'The whole of Elberfeld and Barmen was represented [at the meetings], the proletariat alone excepted.' Engels proudly concludes that in Wuppertal, at least, communism is 'a *vérité*, indeed almost a power already'.²⁴ That Engels had not yet learnt his second lesson from the proletariat is also clear from *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, where he concludes that communism will have a *mitigating* effect on the violence of proletarian class struggle, since 'Communism by its nature stands above the strife between bourgeoisie and proletariat'.²⁵

The first text in which Engels takes a clearly proletarian position and decisively breaks with Left Hegelian and Feuerbachian 'true socialism' is an article for the Chartist *Northern Star* written in September 1845. Engels' depiction of German communism has now changed considerably. 'It is from the very heart of our working people that revolutionary action in Germany will commence. It is true, there are among our middle classes a considerable number of Republicans and even Communists, and young men too, who, if a general outbreak occurred now, would be very useful in the movement; but these men are "bourgeois", profit-mongers, manufacturers by profession; and who can guarantee that they will not be demoralized by their trade, by their social position, which forces them to live upon the toil of other people, to grow fat by being the leeches, the "*exploiteurs*" of the working classes?'²⁶ The article stresses the detonating role of the Silesian weavers, who were followed in 'turn-outs' and 'partial riots' by other groups of workers. What had happened between March and September 1845 was that Engels had met Marx in Brussels (in April), and returned with him to England, where they had held discussions with the Chartists and the London branch of the émigré German League of the Just. Back in Brussels in the autumn of 1845 Marx and Engels started working together on *The German Ideology*.

Marx's Route to the Proletariat

Just as little as Engels was Marx born a Marxist—though in several works on the young Marx this is at least suggested, as a sort of secularized version of the immaculate conception. In his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx gives a brief retrospective view of his intellectual development. There he points to his journalistic experience on the *Rheinische Zeitung*, where he first came to study economic realities (the conditions of the Rhineland peasantry, though not yet of the proletariat), and also encountered 'a philosophically weakly tinged echo of French socialism and communism', with

²³ 'Progress of Social Reform on the Continent', *New Moral World*, 18 November 1843. (English original in Goldsmiths' Library, London; German translation in MEW 1, p. 495.)

²⁴ Engels to Marx, 22–26 February 1845, MEW 27, p. 20.

²⁵ MEW 2, p. 505.

²⁶ 'The Late Butchery in Leipzig—The German Working Men's Movement', *Northern Star*, 13 September 1845. (English original in British Museum, London slightly corrected for grammar; German translation in MEW 2, p. 560.)

which he did not yet identify himself. He also refers to his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State* as the first work in which he tried to solve the questions to which historical materialism eventually proved the solution.²⁷

In the published Introduction to this *Critique*, written at the turn of 1843-4, the proletariat is invoked as the 'material basis' of the German revolution. The workers are inserted here as the solution to an ideological problem of Feuerbachian philosophy. Their vocation is to be the necessary 'passive element' of the German revolution, its 'heart', while philosophy will be the active element, 'the head'.²⁸ Much clearer was to be Marx's violent polemic in August 1844 against his former colleague Arnold Ruge, who in an article in the Paris *Vorwärts* had belittled the importance of the Silesian weavers' uprising of June that year as a local phenomenon devoid of political significance. Marx, on the other hand, paints a glowing picture of the heroic and conscious workers of Silesia. He continues, 'The only task of a thoughtful and truth-loving mind in regard to the first outbreak of the Silesian labour revolt was not to play the role of *schoolmaster* to the event but rather to study its *peculiar* character. For the latter some scientific insight and love of humanity is necessary . . .'²⁹ The Silesian weavers' uprising made an important contribution to Marx's theoretical development in the crucial year 1844, alongside his personal acquaintance with the workers' movement in Paris and his thorough reading of both French and English socialist literature. Marx's admiring and enthusiastic depiction of the Silesian weavers is paralleled by a passage on the collective warmth and human nobility of the Paris workers whom Marx had got to know—a passage that occurs in different variants in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, in a letter to Feuerbach, and in *The Holy Family*. Let us quote from the Feuerbach letter: 'Only by attending one of the meetings of the French *ouvriers* could you believe in the virginal freshness, the nobility, which prevails among these work-weary men.'³⁰

In Paris Marx came to know the real social world, which he contrasts to the ideological shadow world of the German 'Holy Family' in his polemic of autumn 1844 against his former philosopher friends. Whereas in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* the discussion of communism and the different communist tendencies is completely philosophical, with no reference to the class struggle of the workers,³¹ in *The Holy Family* the proletariat already has a much more explicit and concrete role. 'But these *massy* communist workers, working in the factories of Manchester and Lyons, do not imagine they can reason away their industrial lords and their own practical degradation by

²⁷ MEW, pp. 180-4.

²⁸ Easton and Guddat (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 259 and 264.

²⁹ 'Critical Notes on "The King of Prussia and Social Reform"', *ibid.*, pp. 353-4.

³⁰ Marx to Feuerbach, 11 August 1844, MEW 27, p. 426. Cf. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow 1961, pp. 124-5, and Frederick Engels and Karl Marx, *The Holy Family*, in MEW 2, p. 89. Arnold Ruge, Marx's Young Hegelian colleague, looked upon Marx's contacts with the proletariat with contempt: See M. Lowy, *La Théorie de la Révolution Chez Le Jeune Marx*, Paris 1970, p. 87.

³¹ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, pp. 99 ff.

"pure thought" . . . They know that property, capital, money, wage, labour and the rest are in no way ideal fancies, but very practical, very objective products of their self-alienation, which therefore must also be abolished in a practical, objective way.³²

The New Theory and Revolutionary Class Struggle

However, a crucial element of Marxism was still missing, which Marx and Engels distilled from their practical experience: the organized, revolutionary struggle of the working class. This was their solution to the contentious question of strategy debated among the different communist tendencies in the early 1840s. Two rival conceptions of the road to communism had already been elaborated: conspiratorial action by a secret revolutionary society (the tradition of Babeuf and Blanqui, taken over by Weitling and the League of the Just), and simple education and propaganda (Cabet and D  zamy as well as the older utopians and their adherents). Only in *The German Ideology* did Marx and Engels first articulate the way out of this dilemma, though the solution is anticipated in the fragmentary *Theses on Feuerbach* which Marx penned in spring 1845. The third thesis concludes: 'The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice*.'³³ The meaning of this is elaborated in the following passage from *The German Ideology*, which sums up one of the main themes of the new conception of history. 'Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling class* cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the *class overbrowsing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.'³⁴

The German Ideology constitutes a break with many previous conceptions shared by Marx and Engels. Scorn is poured over those Germans who judge everything according to the 'essence of man' by the same writer who a year and a half earlier had stated that: 'The only emancipation of Germany possible *in practice* [sic] is emancipation based on *the* theory proclaiming that man is the highest essence of man,'³⁵ and who somewhat later had claimed that communism was the 'real *appropriation* of the *human* essence by and for man'.³⁶ Engels for his part heaped sarcasms on the German socialists, the 'party' of 'a few pseudo-scholars',³⁷ where he had earlier claimed membership of this party for

³² *MW* 2, pp. 55 ff.

³³ *The German Ideology*, p. 646.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁵ 'Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction', Easton and Guddat (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 264.

³⁶ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 102.

³⁷ *The German Ideology*, p. 513. It was only the lesser minds among the Young Hegelians, the latter-day 'true socialists', that Marx and Engels considered 'pseudo-scholars'. They always acknowledged the solidity of the theological and philosophical writings of Strauss, Bauer and Feuerbach. On Bauer, for example, see Engels's 'Ludwig Feuerbach', *MW*, pp. 591-3.

both Marx and himself. However, the road travelled by Marx and Engels is perhaps best shown by their new conception of the theoretical task lying before them. No longer do they speak of an alliance of philosophy and the proletariat, and the realization of a philosophy of man. Theory now has a much more modest role, to serve the proletariat by clarifying class antagonisms. In reality, the actual property-owners stand on one side and the propertyless communist proletarians on the other. This opposition becomes keener day by day and is rapidly driving to a crisis. If, then, the theoretical representatives of the proletariat wish their literary activity to have any practical effect, they must first and foremost insist that all phrases be swept aside which tend to dim the realization of the sharpness of this opposition, all phrases tending to conceal this opposition and giving the bourgeois a chance to approach the communists for safety's sake on the strength of their philanthropic enthusiasms.³⁸

Having followed the process in which Marx and Engels learnt from the proletariat, we can now see Lenin's view of the role of the intellectual bearers of the theory in fuller perspective. Marx and Engels, after having ~~un~~learnt their 'German ideology', could contribute something to the proletarian movement that even the best theorists from the proletariat itself, such as the German tailor Wilhelm Weitling, could not; a scientific theory of history and a revolutionary strategy based on it. That is why it was Marx and Engels who were commissioned, in 1847, to write both the statutes of the League of Communists and its programme, the *Communist Manifesto*. There is a further aspect of Marx's relationship to the working class that should be emphasized. As revolutionary communists, Marx and Engels soon involved themselves in organizational activity. By way of preparation for a communist party in Germany and for a kind of communist international, they began to organize, in 1846, a network of Communist Correspondence Committees, and a year later they joined with the League of the Just in its reorganization into the League of Communists. In the event, the revolutionary expectations of 1848 were crushed, and the League was destroyed. Marx withdrew into scientific work, Engels to white-collar work as an employee in his family's firm. They both continued to write political journalism, but were otherwise absorbed in their private spheres.

Marxism and Sociology

This is a pattern that can also be traced in the history of bourgeois sociology. Both in the United States and in France, for example, there are several prominent sociologists who in their youth—and sometimes even later—had sympathies with, and perhaps even a membership card in the working-class movement.³⁹ In disillusion they left the latter and became influential sociologists instead. The point about Marx is that he did *not* take that path. *Capital* is not simply a solid work of economics. 'It is certainly the most formidable missile fired so far to strike the bourgeois (landed proprietors included) in the head', as Marx himself

³⁸ *The German Ideology*, pp. 516–17.

³⁹ Seymour Lipset and Jean DuVignaud are two examples.

presented it to a friend.⁴⁰ Even in the years of reaction, Marx maintained his connections with the Chartists and the German Workers' Education Association in London. It was because of this that he was invited by the English trade union leaders to the meeting that founded the First International, in 1864. In the leadership of the International Marx again came to play a central, organizing role, later drawing Engels also into this work.

Marxism and classical sociology are both reflections on capitalism and bourgeois society. Both express in their own way a disillusion with the bourgeois revolution, mediated through a developed intelligentsia. There, however, the similarities end and are overwhelmed by the differences. On the one hand, a solidly established academic intelligentsia, on the other, one persecuted and exiled. On the one hand, a basic attachment to the bourgeoisie and its society, on the other, a dedication to proletarian revolution. There is not a single prominent sociologist of the capitalist world who, as a sociologist, has been part of a militant labour movement; whatever other differences there may be among sociologists, they all have this in common. This fundamental gap between Marxism and academic sociology is particularly important to bear in mind now that Marxist ideas are being discussed among sociologists and theories of convergence or cross-fertilization are put forward.⁴¹ Indeed, this class difference goes to the very root of Marxist social theory.

The 20th century has, however, seen a group of intellectuals who, both socially and intellectually, were the legitimate heirs of Marx and Engels and their closest comrades; a group who, dedicated and non-bohemian, were also persecuted and exiled, whose perspective was also formed by the combined experience of advanced capitalism and an abortive bourgeois revolution, who were part of the proletarian class struggle both in their native country and elsewhere, and who viewed struggles within and between nations from an international standpoint: Lenin and the Bolshevik intellectuals.

⁴⁰ Marx to Becker, 17 April 1867, MEW 31, p. 541.

⁴¹ See, e.g. A. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, London 1971.

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Gareth Stedman Jones

Engels and the End of Classical German Philosophy

Every science has a beginning. Every new science must come from somewhere. It is usually easy enough to discover forerunners and anticipations. What is more difficult is to pinpoint and clarify what is new and original to the science in its course of elaboration. It is clear for example that one of the basic propositions of Galileo—that the language of nature is written in mathematical symbols—is Platonic in inspiration and can be traced back through a whole philosophical tradition. It is clear also that whatever it is that Galileo takes from Plato is transformed in the act of constructing Galilean physics, and that the end result is something authentically new which cannot be reduced to the sum total of its sources. A similar problem arises in the relationship between Darwin and Malthus. We know from Darwin's own confession that the initial inspiration of his theory came from Malthus. Yet whatever it is that Darwin takes over from Malthus, is so transformed in the course of the elaboration of the theory of evolution, that we can quite consistently both reject the Malthusian theory of population and accept in broad outlines the Darwinian theory of the evolution of the species.

It might be thought that the answer can be found in what scientific innovators have themselves said about their discoveries and the new scientific procedures they have elaborated. But this is by no means a sure guide. Often scientists are unable to think what is authentically new in the scientific procedures that they have employed. They are of course aware of the novelty of their conclusions, but they are often unable to explain what it was that was novel in their manner of working on their raw material which enabled them to reach those conclusions. Often, in their search to identify the scientific method they have employed, they have recourse to pre-existing philosophic categories. But almost without exception, this resort only compounds the confusion: the new science thereby constructs for itself a false genealogy; its discontinuity with the pre-existing state of knowledge is flattened into a spurious form of continuity, and its new discoveries risk being obscured by the weight of philosophical ideology. We can give a very clear example of this in the case of Newton. When he attempted to explain his methods of investigation, in the *Rules of Philosophizing*, he expressed them in the terminology of Lockean empiricism. This translation of new scientific procedures into the terminology of common sense empiricism, far from facilitating scientific progress in the 18th century, placed a major obstacle in its path.¹

The essential point is that a new science in the course of elaboration, is rarely if ever able to step back and isolate what is authentically new and epistemologically distinct in its procedures, let alone draw the full philosophical consequences from its discoveries. The philosophical consequences of scientific discoveries are generally perceived only after a considerable passage of time has elapsed, and when they are perceived they generally turn out to be rather different from those which the scientist himself had imagined. Cartesian philosophy is quite distant from the platonic form in which Galileo expressed his discoveries. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is rather different from anything that Newton envisaged in his *Rules of Philosophizing*. Hegel correctly perceived this lag between the birth of new sciences and the articulation of their philosophical consequences when he wrote that the Owl or Minerva takes wing at dusk.

The Conjunctural Background 1870-1890

The problem that I have just outlined, was Engels' problem. Moreover in Engels' case, it was a problem that could not be left to the fullness of time for its solution. From the late 1870s, Marx's work was beginning to become known in the European labour movement. It was already acknowledged as the correct socialist theory, although barely understood, by Liebknecht and Bebel, the leaders of the German Social-Democratic party. In the course of the next dozen years, groups and embryonic parties modelling themselves on the German Social Democratic Party, and basing themselves on what they took to be the ideas of Marx, sprang up in every major European country—the Part Ouvrier Français in 1879, the Russian Group of the Emancipation of

¹ For the influence of the Newtonian theory of induction upon 18th century thought see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, New York 1951.

Labour and the English Social-Democratic Federation in 1883, the Parti Ouvrier Belge in 1885, the Austrian and Swiss Social Democratic Parties in 1888 and the Italian Socialist Party in 1892. The task of systematizing historical materialism and deducing its implications had become politically urgent. That task fell to Engels.

Needless to say, Engels' formulation of historical materialism and the philosophy he elaborated to accompany it, have been of momentous consequence. For they marked the transition, so to speak, from Marx to Marxism and provided the formative moment of all the leading Marxist interpreters of the Second International and most of the leaders of the Third. As Kautsky testified towards the end of his life, 'judging by the influence that *Anti-Dühring* had upon me, no other book can have contributed so much to the understanding of Marxism. Marx's *Capital* is the more powerful work, certainly. But it was only through *Anti-Dühring* that we learnt to understand *Capital* and read it properly'.² According to Ryazanov, *Anti-Dühring* 'was epoch-making in the history of Marxism. It was from this book that the younger generation which began its activity during the second half of the 1870s learned what was scientific socialism, what were its philosophic premises, what was its method . . . all the young Marxists, who entered the public arena in the early eighties—Bernstein, Kautsky, Plekhanov—were brought up on this book'.³

The difference in atmosphere between the later 1870s when *Anti-Dühring* was written and the late 1880s is evident in Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach* of 1888. While *Anti-Dühring* had been designed as no more than a political intervention into an ideological dispute within the German Social-Democratic Party and was composed with some reluctance—'It was a year before I could make up my mind to neglect other work and get my teeth into this sour apple'⁴—*Feuerbach* was written in a quite different spirit. 'The Marxist world outlook has found representatives far beyond the boundaries of Germany and Europe and in all the literary languages of the world', wrote Engels in his preface. 'In these circumstances a short coherent account of our relation to the Hegelian philosophy, of how we proceeded, as well as of how we separated from it, appeared to me to be required more and more.'⁵

The Inversion of Hegel

How then does Engels characterize the general nature of historical materialism and the intellectual situation from which it emerged? The answer in *Ludwig Feuerbach* is fairly clear: a combination of a materialist world outlook, Feuerbach's contribution, and the dialectical method of Hegel, Hegel's 'revolutionary side'. According to Engels, Hegel's general system was in contradiction to his method. According to the dialectical method: 'all that is real in the sphere of human history

² F. Engels' *Briefwechsel mit K. Kautsky*, Vienna 1955, pp. 4, 77; see also Lucio Colletti, *Introduction to Marx's Early Writings* (Penguin, forthcoming).

³ D. Ryazanov, *Marx and Engels*, London 1927, p. 210.

⁴ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow 1969, pp. 9–10.

⁵ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy*, in: Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, London 1968, pp. 594–5.

becomes irrational in the process of time, and is therefore irrational by its very destination . . . and everything which is rational in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict existing apparent reality.⁶ Or in short: 'All that exists deserves to perish.'⁷ This was the revolutionary side of Hegel. 'It once and for all dealt the death blow to the finality of all products of human thought and action.'⁸ This is the implicit conclusion to be drawn from Hegel, but one that Hegel himself never drew. Because he had to complete his system in accordance with philosophical tradition, he rounded it off with a theory of absolute knowledge which dogmatically smothered the revolutionary implications of his dialectical method. This interpretation of Hegel, was, as Engels correctly points out, the view of the young Hegelian Left in the 1830s.⁹

Once Marx and Engels had been converted to a materialist position and had begun the process of elaborating the materialist conception of history, their attitude to Hegel changed. According to Engels, this change was of the following kind: 'Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, a start was made from his revolutionary side . . . from the dialectical method. But in its Hegelian form this method was unusable . . . according to Hegel . . . the dialectical movement apparent in nature and history, that is, the causal interconnection of the progressive movement from the lower to the higher, which asserts itself through all zig-zag movements and temporary retrogressions, is only a copy of the self-movement of the concept going from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events, independently of any thinking brain. This ideological perversion had to be done away with. We . . . took a materialist view of the thoughts in our heads, regarding them as images of real things instead of regarding the real things as images of this or that stage of the absolute concept . . . in this way . . . the revolutionary side of Hegelian philosophy was again taken up and at the same time freed from the idealist trimmings which with Hegel had prevented its consistent execution.'¹⁰

The Dialectic in Capital

Without for the moment questioning the possibility of such an inversion of Hegel, let us see how this materialist dialectical method, works itself out in the classic scientific work of historical materialism, *Capital*. How did Marx apply this method? It should be possible to find the answer to this question, in the two chapters of *Anti-Dühring* which deal with the Marx's use of the dialectic in *Capital*. In his chapter on quantity and quality, Dühring had accused Marx of employing the 'confused hazy Hegelian notion'¹¹ that quantity changes into quality and that 'therefore an advance, when it reaches a certain size, becomes capital by this qualitative increase alone'.¹² Engels replies by citing in detail, the

⁶ *Selected Works*, p. 597.

⁷ *Selected Works*, p. 597.

⁸ *Selected Works*, p. 598.

⁹ *Selected Works*, p. 601.

¹⁰ *Selected Works*, p. 619.

¹¹ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 153.

¹² *Anti-Dühring*, p. 149.

passage to which Dühring is referring. He shows that Marx, on the basis of his previous examination of constant capital, variable capital and surplus value, draws the conclusion that 'not every sum of money or of value, is at pleasure transformable into capital. To effect this transformation, in fact, a certain minimum of money or of exchange value must be presupposed in the hands of the individual possessor of money or commodities'.¹³ Marx, as Engels points out, gives a number of examples to demonstrate his proposition, and it is only after his statement has already been fully substantiated, that Marx goes on to observe: 'here, as in natural science, is shown the correctness of the law discovered by Hegel (in his Logic) that merely quantitative differences beyond a certain point pass into qualitative changes'.¹⁴

The second major example of dialectical method in *Capital*, cited by Engels, concerns Dühring's attack on Marx's analysis of Primitive Accumulation. Dühring praises this chapter, but remarks that it would have been better had it not relied on a 'dialectical crutch'¹⁵ to help it to its conclusion; for, he argued, 'Marx has no other way of proving the necessity of the social revolution, of establishing the common ownership of land and of the means of production produced by labour, except by citing the Hegelian negation of the negation; and because he bases his socialist theory on these nonsensical analogies borrowed from religion, he arrives at the result that in the society of the future there will be dominant an ownership at once both individual and social, as Hegelian higher unity of the sublated contradiction'.¹⁶ Engels, in his reply to Dühring, first of all shows that the higher unity to which Dühring refers, means nothing more mystical than the combination of the social ownership of land and the means of production on the one hand, and individual ownership of articles of consumption on the other. Having disposed of the idea that socialism will mean 'sublation'—'simultaneous overcoming and preserving'—in the Hegelian sense, Engels then proceeds to examine Marx's argument in his chapter on primitive accumulation. This section of *Capital* recounts the expropriation of petty industry, the transformation of individual and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, the transformation of labourers into proletarians and their means of labour into capital and then with the further development of the capitalist mode of production, the expropriation of individual capitalists, the increasing concentration of capital, the development of the cooperative labour process, the conscious application of science, the creation of socialized labour, the growth of a proletariat itself increasingly unified by the concentration of capital, and so on until the point where capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production. 'The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.'¹⁷ Having reproduced this whole argument, Engels remarks, 'and now I ask the reader: where are the dialectical frills and mazes and conceptual arabesques'.¹⁸ He then concludes that it is only after Marx has com-

¹³ Marx, *Capital*, Moscow 1961, Vol. I, pp. 307-8.

¹⁴ *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 309.

¹⁵ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 155.

¹⁶ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 156.

¹⁷ *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 763.

¹⁸ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 160.

pleted his proof on the basis of historical and economic facts, that he proceeds to a summary of the process employing the Hegelian notion of the negation of the negation. Engels concludes by stating: 'thus, by characterizing the process as the negation of the negation, Marx does not intend to prove that the process was historically necessary. On the contrary: only after he has proved from history that in fact the process has partially already occurred, and partially must occur in the future, he in addition characterizes it as a process which develops in accordance with a definite dialectical law. That is all'.¹⁹

Certainly in these passages, Engels disproves Dühring's idea that Marx has any need of 'dialectical crutches' or that the dialectic exists as a 'proof-producing' instrument. But Engels has also proved something else, something that he did not intend to prove and something which he does not seem to be aware of having proved: that is, that the Hegelian dialectic in *Capital* is superfluous, that fundamental dialectical laws like the passage of quantity into quality and the negation of the negation, are mere re-descriptions of processes which have been established by quite different means. All that can be conceded without any difficulty, is, as Marx states in the preface, that in a period when Hegel had almost been forgotten and was being treated like a 'dead dog', Marx was not ashamed to avow himself 'the pupil of that mighty thinker' and even here and there to 'flirt' with 'modes of expression peculiar to him'.²⁰

The Flux of Notion and Interconnection

Why is it then that Engels was so convinced that the distinctive feature of historical materialism was its application of the dialectic when his demonstration of the importance of the dialectic in *Capital* tends to reduce its actual significance to that of a feeble appendage? It is certainly not that he misunderstood the actual argument of *Capital*, for his exposition of its main points in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* and elsewhere is on the whole a model of lucidity, and his analysis of the significance and implications of Marx's theory of surplus value truly situates the nature of Marx's transformation of political economy as a scientific revolution—an idea which has nothing to do with the Hegelian idea of supersession. To understand why, nevertheless, Engels was so convinced that the dialectical method is the revolutionary new form of knowledge at work in historical materialism, we must look more closely at the way he defined it.

In *Fourbach*, he characterizes it this way: 'thus dialectics reduces itself to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought—two sets of laws which are identical in substance, but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously in the form of external necessity, in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents'.²¹ In *The Dialectics of Nature*, he defines dialectics in

¹⁹ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 161.

²⁰ *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 19–20.

²¹ *Selected Works*, p. 619.

contrast to metaphysics, as 'the science of inter-connections',²² and he condenses these forms of interconnection into three laws—the law of the transformation of quantity into quality, the law of the interpenetration of opposites, and the law of the negation of the negation. But, as he stresses in *Fewerbach*, 'it is no longer a question anywhere of inventing interconnections from out of our brains, but of discovering them in the facts'.²³ Hegel's mistake, he wrote in *Dialectics of Nature*, 'lies in the fact that these laws are foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, and not deduced from them. This is the source of (his) whole forced and often outrageous treatment . . . if we turn the thing round, then everything becomes simple, and the dialectical laws that look so extremely mysterious in idealist philosophy at once become simple and clear as noonday'.²⁴ Or, as he puts it in *Anti-Dühring*, they reveal 'a process which is taking place everywhere and every day, which any child can understand'.²⁵

As far as the natural sciences are concerned, he says in *Dialectics of Nature*, 'hard and fast lines are incompatible with the theory of evolution . . . for a stage in the outlook on nature where all differences become merged in intermediate steps, and all opposites pass into each other through intermediate links, the old metaphysical method of thought no longer suffices. Dialectics which likewise knows no hard and fast lines, no unconditionally, universally valid either/or, and which bridges the fixed metaphysical differences . . . and reconciles opposites, is the sole method of thought appropriate in the highest degree to this stage'.²⁶ To sum up, dialectics, as he puts it in *Fewerbach*, is that 'great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away in which in spite of all seeming accidentality and of all temporary retrogression, a fundamental development asserts itself in the end'.²⁷

We can now begin to see why Engels attributed such tremendous power to the dialectic, even if its formal concepts are not used very much in *Capital*. For the dialectic is synonymous with history itself and history is everything. Hegel's dialectic breaks down the fixity of the concepts of the understanding, the immobile distinctions made by the mind—either/or, cause/effect, and so on. History likewise knows no fixed states; everything comes into being and passes away, everything is in movement, whether it belongs to the natural world or the human world. Hegel's mistake was to imagine that this was a process of thought and then project it rather arbitrarily onto the world; but in fact it is the process of the world itself, and all thought does is to reflect it, or rather since thought is also part of this world process, thought simply raises this process to consciousness.

²² F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow 1966, p. 62.

²³ *Selected Works*, p. 631.

²⁴ *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 62.

²⁵ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 162.

²⁶ *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 212–13.

²⁷ *Selected Works*, p. 620.

History and Science

But why does history have this infinite power which Engels ascribes to it? Why does he feel it to be so omnipresent, so obviously the dominant characteristic of everything that exists? The answer to this question is to be found, not so much in Hegel, as in the whole socio-economic history of the 19th century and the development of science which accompanied it. On the one hand, European and indeed world history had since 1789 undergone an immensely accelerated course of development. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic conquest of Europe, the risings of 1830, the European revolutions of 1848, the effective unification of Germany, Italy and the USA, the colonization of vast areas in Africa and Asia, the growth of large scale industry in England and its spread through Europe and America, the economic ruin of traditional strata of artisans and peasants, the breakdown of feudal relations in agriculture, the mass migrations from the countryside to the towns, the growth of a world market, the internationalization of political ideologies, the growth of mass proletarian parties and the beginnings of a world socialist movement had all occurred virtually in the space of a lifetime. All this in itself would be enough to produce a heightened sense of the absolute omnipotence of the historical process. But this had in its turn been accompanied by the opening up of the historical continent to scientific investigation. As Engels interpreted it, scientific advance in the 19th century had taken place in the form of the creation of historical sciences, developmental sciences and sciences of interconnection. The first group included the Kant-Laplace hypothesis of the origin of the universe, geology, palaeontology and evolutionary biology; the second group included embryology and the theory of the cell; the third group included comparative anatomy, organic chemistry, the theory of the transformation of energy and the mechanical theory of heat. Finally of course, there was the discovery of the science of history—historical materialism, a science which simultaneously connected man to nature and to human history and thus forged the final links in the chain. Thus, if we view the course of scientific development in the 19th century through the eyes of Engels,²⁵ we can on the one hand see a virtually uninterrupted *historical* process starting off with the Kant-Laplace theory of the origins of the universe and then proceeding through geology, palaeontology, evolutionary biology to historical materialism; and on the other, a virtually uninterrupted process of *interconnection*, the theory of the transformation of energy linking physics and chemistry, organic chemistry, the cell theory linking inanimate and animate matter, the theory of evolution linking all life from the simplest cell to man, and historical materialism linking man as animal and man as history—all in the last resort unified as a whole once they were seen to be differing forms of a general law of motion. It is not difficult to understand therefore how terms like movement, flux, change, motion and process could be combined into one single image of extraordinary power.

This image was a concentrate on the one hand of the evolution of real history, and on the other hand of all major scientific progress. Two

²⁵ *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 26–30, 194–5.

quite distinct developments—the process of scientific thought and the process of real history—were merged into one concept, *history* or *process*. Then this concept was further distilled into its essence, its inner principle, its general law of motion: the dialectic. Quite unconsciously, an extraordinary verbal sleight of hand had occurred. Nothing so far had been established by Engels about the dialectic, beyond the fact that in Hegel it was a method whereby the fixity of concepts was broken down and they were in some manner set in motion. And the same great advance had been registered in the 19th century by a number of determinate sciences whose mode of establishing their conclusions had nothing to do with the dialectic. Yet, for Engels, it was not the dialectic which must justify *its* procedures in relation to these determinate sciences. It was, on the contrary, these sciences which must justify their procedures before the tribunal of the dialectic. In other words, the contemporary revolutions in science had been transposed into the flux of history itself, and their combined power had then been transposed into the dialectic, which thereby was elevated into the quintessence of the historical process, its general law of motion. This dialectic, now bloated with the borrowed prestige acquired not only from history itself but also from the sciences of history, was then directed at the very scientific procedures which had made the scientific revolutions of the age possible. The methods of these sciences were now declared by Engels to be ‘metaphysical’.²⁹

The nature of this feat can be made even clearer if we ask what is the content of these Laws which ‘assert themselves unconsciously in the form of external necessity, in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents’.³⁰ We find that in human history these laws of necessity are none other than the relation between the forces and relations of production, which were the object of Marx’s scientific investigation in *Capital*. We likewise find that in the history of nature, the laws of necessity are the Darwinian laws of evolution, and that in the realm of matter generally they are the laws of mechanics, physics and chemistry. If we then look at the boundary line that separates the laws of necessity from all the ‘seeming accidents’, we find that it corresponds in every case with the boundary between that which has been made the object of scientific explanation and that which has not yet been made the object of scientific explanation; or to put it more simply, between that which is so far known in a science and that which is not.

If the ‘unconscious laws’ have been established quite independently of the dialectic by determinate sciences, and if the dialectic is not ‘proof producing’, as Engels insists that it is not, what then does the dialectic add to what science has already established? Engels tells us that it

²⁹ ‘Until the end of the last century, indeed until 1830, natural scientists could manage pretty well with the old metaphysics, because real science did not go beyond mechanics—terrestrial and cosmic. . . . Now, however, everything is quite different. Chemistry, the abstract divisibility of physical things, bad infinity—atomistics. Physiology—the cell, and finally the identity of the forces of nature and their mutual convertibility, which put an end to all fixity of categories. Nevertheless, the bulk of natural scientists are still held fast in the old metaphysical categories . . .’, *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 203–5.

³⁰ *Selected Works*, p. 619.

provides the general law of motion. Therefore to find out more about the nature of this law of motion, we must examine Hegel's dialectic, which Engels believed to be its intellectual source.

Hegel's Definition of Idealism

Hegel defined his system as an absolute idealism.³¹ Idealism for him meant the viewpoint that denies that things and the finite world have a true reality. True being belongs to the infinite, that is to thought—not ordinary human thought although it is expressed through it, but absolute thought, Logos or God. Thus the finite world *seems* to be but *is* not; it is the world of illusory being, of appearance. Therefore idealism must annihilate this finite world and replace it with true reality. According to Hegel, no previous philosophy had succeeded in doing this, because it had adopted the viewpoint, not of 'reason' but of 'understanding'—that is, merely human thinking symbolized in the *modus operandi* of the natural sciences which are based on the principle of non-contradiction and the mutual exclusion of opposites. The 'understanding' separates and divides. Therefore when idealist philosophy adopts this mode of thinking, although it declares the finite world not to be the true world, it in fact makes the finite world 'imperishable' and 'absolute'. The finite becomes eternal, which is what Hegel calls, a 'bad infinity', and the infinite is relegated to an empty beyond; it becomes a mere ideal.³² The 'understanding' cannot comprehend the unity of the finite and the infinite within the infinite; it cannot produce a true totality, but like Kant remains trapped in an inescapable dualism. God for it is only the God of deism, an infinitely remote figure who winds up the clock.

To produce a true idealism, a philosophy of immanence is necessary. The finite is not only not true being, the finite is also ideal. That is, the finite has an essence which is other than itself—the infinite, the immaterial, thought. Since the essence of the finite is other than itself, the finite is only truly itself when it is other. This is the dialectic. The finite is considered in relation to what it is not. The essence of the finite is its opposite. But this act of negating and finite, is defined by Hegel as the *objective movement* carried out by the finite itself in order to go beyond itself and thus pass over to its essence. It is not the ordinary human subject who negates the finite. It is on the contrary the very nature of the finite itself, to transcend itself and become infinite—in other words, to negate its negation.³³ This process is not accomplished by an extraneous force, but is immanent in the process itself. As Hegel put it, 'God is only accessible in pure speculative knowledge, and is only in

³¹ 'The proposition that the finite is ideal constitutes idealism. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in recognizing that the finite has no veritable being. Every philosophy is essentially an idealism or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only how far this principle is actually carried out.' Hegel, *Science of Logic* (tr. Miller), London 1970, pp. 154–5. The best discussions of Hegel's *Logic* are to be found in J. Hyppolite, *Logique et Existence. Essai sur la Logique de Hegel*, Paris 1953; and L. Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel* (n.p., forthcoming), Chapters I–IX.

³² See *Science of Logic*, p. 150; *Encyclopaedia—The Logic* (tr. Wallace), London 1968, p. 177.

³³ *Science of Logic*, p. 158.

this knowledge, and is only this knowledge itself.³⁴ The identity of being and thought is realised within thought, but this thought is not ordinary human thought, but Absolute thought which thinks itself through human thought. Hegel says, 'real are not those things external to thought, but those things penetrated by thought',³⁵ for they are no longer things but thought-objects. In immediacy a thing is only appearance and contingency. It is real only as a moment of the idea, and this is the true meaning of Hegel's famous dictum, wrongly taken by the young Hegelians and Engels for a revolutionary slogan, that 'what is rational is real and what is real is rational'. To cite Hegel again, 'illusory being' or what we would call material reality, 'is not nothing, but is a reflection, a relation to the absolute'. Thus being is reduced to thought, and thought in its turn *is*. The logical unity of opposites comes to exist and is incarnate in the real object. It is this unity of opposites which creates movement. As Hegel says, 'it is one of the fundamental prejudices of Logic as hitherto understood and of ordinary thinking, that contradiction is not so characteristically essential and immanent a determination as identity . . .'. But 'if it were a question of grading the two determinations and they had to be kept separate, then contradiction would have to be taken as the profounder determination and more characteristic of essence. For as against contradiction, identity is merely the determination of the simple immediate, of dead being; but contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity'.³⁶ To sum up; 'external sensuous motion itself is contradiction's immediate existence. Something moves, not because at one moment it is here and at another there, but because in this "here" it at once is and is not'.³⁷

It should be clear from this account, that the general law of motion contained in Hegel's dialectic really has nothing to do with any historical process as such. It is, of course, true that Hegel did project it into history. But it is also true that he projected it onto nature, which he defined as having no history and only existing in space. The movement of the dialectic is in fact purely logical, and it is precisely the identity of being and thought within thought which creates motion. If, therefore Engels, as a materialist, starts from the proposition of the non-identity of being and thought, there is no general law of motion left. Engels seems to have been unaware that dialectical motion in Hegel's philosophy is based on the inseparability of thought and being. In his version, the dialectic is the process of material reality and thought is a reflection of this process, 'merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world'.³⁸ But this inversion leads to a result that is logically absurd. For either thought reflects the identity of being and thought and therefore thought is reflecting itself. Or thought reflects being not endowed with thought, but then there is no dialectic. For thought is no longer reflecting processes in the original dialectical

³⁴ Cited in Hyppolite, *Logique et Existence*, p. 24.

³⁵ Cited in Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel*, p. 16.

³⁶ *Science of Logic*, p. 439.

³⁷ *Science of Logic*, p. 440.

³⁸ Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, p. 619.

sense of the word, but merely things, what Hegel would term 'dead being' or the 'kingdom of death'.

Engels' Loans from Hegel

We can now see that the inconsistency between method and system is to be found, not in Hegel but in Engels. We can have materialism or we can have the general dialectical law of motion. But we cannot have both. This inconsistency was first pointed out by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*³⁹ (and he chose to keep the dialectic), and it has since been exhaustively demonstrated from a very different point of view, in the works of Colletti.⁴⁰ It certainly led to bizarre results, for when Engels attacked 'metaphysics' in the name of dialectical science, he was in fact attacking the methods of the natural sciences in the name of a principle designed to realize absolute metaphysics. Hegel had criticized the old metaphysics, not for wanting to be metaphysical, but on the contrary for employing a method derived from natural science which prevented the aim of metaphysics from being realized.

Nevertheless, this inconsistency was doubtless not the most serious consequence of Engels' borrowings from Hegel. It was certainly anti-scientific in implication, but it was not anti-scientific in intention. On the contrary. Engels' stress upon the scientific character of historical materialism and his general emphasis on the importance for socialism of scientific advance in every sphere should be cited to his credit, and not to his detriment as a long tradition of Lukácsian Marxists, and others have done ever since the early 1920s.

The gravest consequence of Engels' theory of the dialectic, stemmed not from his unsuccessful attempt to use it as a bridge between different sciences, but rather in the way in which it distorted the character of historical materialism itself and unwittingly transformed it from an open-ended infant science in the course of elaboration into the appearance of a finished system already capable of explaining all events, great and small.

In Hegel, it is the unity of opposites, the identity of being and thought, which destroys the fixity of the concepts of the 'understanding'. In Engels, as we have seen, it is the real process of history, the materialist dialectic which subverts the old fixed concepts of 'metaphysics'. In a letter to Conrad Schmidt, written in 1890, inveighing against an economic reductionist interpretation of Marxism, Engels wrote; 'What these gentlemen all lack is dialectics. They always see only here cause, there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites exist in the real world only during crises, while the vast process goes on in the form of interaction—though of very unequal forces . . . that here everything is relative and nothing is absolute—this they never begin to see. As far as they are concerned Hegel never existed.'⁴¹ Or in another letter again to Schmidt, this time written in

³⁹ G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, London 1971, pp. 199–200.

⁴⁰ Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel*, passim; *From Rousseau to Lenin*, London 1972, pp. 111–28.

⁴¹ Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow 1965, p. 425.

1895, he wrote, 'from the moment we accept the theory of evolution all our concepts of organic life correspond only approximately to reality. Otherwise there would be no change. On the day when concepts and reality completely coincide in the organic world, development comes to an end'.⁴² Despite his reference to the theory of evolution, Engels is here once again implicitly invoking Hegel. In another letter to Schmidt written in 1891, Engels indicates where the rational kernel of Hegelianism is to be found: 'the doctrine of essence is the main thing: the resolution of the abstract contradictions into their own instability, where one no sooner tries to hold on to one side alone, than it changes unnoticed into the other'.⁴³

The doctrine of Essence in Hegel's *Logic* in fact consists of a dialectical analysis of the principal categories characteristic of reflective and scientific thought—identity and difference, content and form, force and its manifestations, the whole and the parts, necessity and accident, cause and effect, interaction and so on. Each concept is weighed up but found to be inadequate and one-sided; it therefore negates itself and passes into its opposite; a new synthesis emerges which is in turn negated; and so on until Being and Essence find their truth in the 'Notion'. Many of Hegel's analyses are, indeed, as Engels claimed, very brilliant. But the essential question is: by what criterion are these concepts being judged? They are actually all one-sided because Hegel's criterion of judgment is the Absolute, which by its very definition contains every existent. In other words, the concepts examined by Hegel have been wrenched out of the determinate sciences where they were operative, and judged according to their ability to express the Absolute process which is the identity of thought and being within thought. Of course, judged by this criterion, it is not surprising that they are found to be one-sided, especially since some of the concepts analysed by Hegel were indeed tautologies devised to help 18th century science over epistemological voids, to provide verbal explanations of factors which could not be explained in terms of the sciences themselves.

Contingency and Necessity

Engels accepted the Hegelian transition of concepts and indeed considered it to be the very core of Hegel's 'revolutionary side'. But since he rejected the Absolute Idea as an 'ideological perversion',⁴⁴ by what criterion, in his case, were these concepts found lacking and one-sided? The answer is, of course, the real historical process, or the materialist dialectic. But this solution effectively raised history to the status of the Hegelian Absolute, and the 'idealist crotchet' which Engels believed he and Marx had thrown out of the window, had re-entered by the back-door. This appeal to a new Absolute is very clear in a passage of *Anti-Dühring* in which Engels remarks: 'We find that cause and effect are conceptions which only hold good in their application to individual cases; but as soon as we consider the individual cases in *their general connection with the universe as a whole*, they run into each other, and they

⁴² *Selected Correspondence*, p. 484.

⁴³ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 438.

⁴⁴ *Selected Works*, p. 619.

become confounded when we contemplate that universal action and reaction in which causes and effects are eternally changing places, so that what is effect here and now will be cause there and then, and vice versa'.⁴⁵

Moreover, as soon as a new Absolute is admitted, a surreptitious empiricism is also in fact re-introduced. The Absolute, by definition includes everything and must in principle explain everything, otherwise it will cease to be Absolute. Hegel had already been confronted with the problems involved in this claim, particularly in his *Philosophy of Nature*. He had tried to solve them in the following fashion: 'The contradiction of the Idea, arising from the fact that, as Nature, it is external to itself, is more precisely this: that on the one hand there is the necessity of its forms which is generated by the Notion, and their rational determination in the organic totality; while on the other hand there is their indifferent contingency and indeterminable irregularity. In the sphere of Nature contingency and determination from without has its right, and this contingency is at its greatest in the realm of concrete individual forms. . . . This is the impotence of Nature, that it preserve the determinations of the Notion only abstractly, and leaves their detailed specification to external determination'.⁴⁶ Here, then, Hegel finds that Being is not able to match up to the Concept. Once the Hegelian dialectic is inverted, it is therefore not surprising to find many statements in Engels to the effect that concepts can only 'approximately' or 'asymptotically'⁴⁷ measure up to being. While Hegel found no difficulty in explaining the development of thought and ideology, but had to admit to a short-term impotence of Nature to accord to the Notion and to an irreducible stratum of contingency or accident, Engels had to grapple with precisely the reverse problem. In a letter to Starkenbor in 1894, he wrote, 'the further the particular sphere we are investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches that of pure abstract ideology, the more we shall find it exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its curve run zig-zag. But if you plot the average axis of the curve, you will find that this axis will run more and more nearly parallel to the axis of economic development, the longer the period considered and the wider the field dealt with'.⁴⁸

Before considering Engels's general solution to this problem, we must briefly assess what the new science of historical materialism has accomplished and what it had not yet accomplished by the time of Marx's death. We shall then be in a better position to understand the political and historical importance of Engels' solution. Marx's *Capital* is the theory of the Capitalist mode of production; it does not concern itself with the examination of any particular social formation, that is, any particular country existing in reality. It therefore does not contain except tangentially, any fully theorized conception of the relationship between the base and the superstructure—that is, between the forces

⁴⁵ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 32.

⁴⁶ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia—Philosophy of Nature* (tr. Miller), London 1970, pp. 22–3.

⁴⁷ See, for instance, Engels' letter to Schmidt, 12 March 1895, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 482.

⁴⁸ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 468.

and relations of production on the one hand, and political, juridical and ideological forms on the other. In particular, while it provides a materialist basis for the statement that the class struggle is the motor of history, it does not pretend to deal with the role, temporality and strategy of the class struggle in its relation to the structure of a determinate social formation in which more often than not, more than one mode of production might coexist. To find indications of what this relationship might be, we have to turn to Marx's other works, for example *The Eighteenth Brumaire* or *The Civil War in France*. Yet these historical works were all written after the events they describe; they certainly contain important indications of the way in which political struggle and to a lesser extent ideological struggle relate to the material base or current combination of the forces and relations of production. But these indications are never theorized as such; they have to be read *through* the specific analysis of the historical events described. What emerges from them of course, is that the economy is in the last instance determinant, and yet that superstructures possess a particular form of causal efficacy which cannot be simply reduced to the economic base. But the precise structural mechanism connecting the two is always left unclear by Marx.

The Problem of the Role of Superstructures

The most important political and scientific task that was bequeathed to Engels in 1883 was to provide an explanation of this mechanism. It is evident that already by 1880 the task was becoming urgent. The chief threat no longer came from the followers of Lassalle, Bakunin or Proudhon, all of whom had been considerably influenced by Hegel. The new danger came from the positivism of Dühring and Buckle, and the monism of Haeckel—all of which, filtered into historical materialism, tended to reduce it to a mechanistic economic determinism, in which the superstructures became a virtually automatic reflex of the base. The urgency of combating this conception is reflected in virtually every letter and article of Engels concerning historical materialism from the mid 1880s onwards. In 1890, he wrote to Bloch: 'According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of social life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase.'⁴⁹ Or again in a letter to Mehring who was composing an article on historical materialism in 1893, Engels said; 'One more point is lacking, which however Marx and I always failed to stress enough in our writings and in regard to which we were all equally guilty . . . we all laid and were bound to lay, the main emphasis in the first place, on the derivation of political, juridical and other ideological notions . . . from basic economic facts . . . This has given our adversaries a welcome opportunity for misunderstandings and distortions.'⁵⁰ In all his discussions of this question, it is quite clear that Engels wished to preserve the irreducibility of the two propositions that the economy

⁴⁹ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 417.

⁵⁰ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 459.

is determinant in the last instance and yet that superstructures have their own causal efficacy, and when he discusses specific historical examples, he certainly established his position. He showed—among other things—very clearly that the State could obstruct, channel or promote economic development, that Roman Law could co-exist with slavery, feudalism and capitalism, and that Christianity had similarly outlived the mode of production in which it was born.

But when Engels came to a theorization of the relationship between the base and the superstructure, his clarity of grasp significantly disappeared. In his letter to Bloch of 1890, he wrote: 'There is an interaction of all these elements (i.e. of the superstructure) in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible of proof, that we can regard it as non-existent or negligible) the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary . . .'⁵¹ In a letter to Starkenberg in 1894, he developed this idea; 'Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic situation is cause, solely active, while everything else is only passive effect. There is rather, interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself . . . men make their history themselves, but not as yet with collective plan . . . Their aspirations clash, and for that very reason all such societies are governed by necessity, the complement and form of appearance of which is accident. The necessity which here asserts itself athwart an accident is again ultimately economic necessity.'⁵² Or again, in *Letter to Feuerbach*, he wrote: 'Historical events thus appear on the whole to be likewise governed by chance. But where on the surface accident holds sway, there actually, it is always governed by inner, hidden laws and is only a matter of discovering these laws.'⁵³

It is clear here that Engels' involuntary elevation of history to the status of an Absolute has engendered the same solution to the problem of the relationship of base and superstructure, as Hegel had advanced for the relationship of Nature to the Notion. For Hegel had written in the *Encyclopaedia*; 'On the surface of nature, so to speak, Chance reigns unchecked, and that contingency must simply be recognized, without the pretension sometimes erroneously ascribed to philosophy (of economic reductionism), of seeking to find in it a could-only-be-so-and-not otherwise . . . the problem of science, and especially of philosophy, undoubtedly consists of eliciting the necessity concealed under the semblance of contingency.'⁵⁴ Indeed, when Hegel later discusses cause and effect and resolves it into reciprocity, he mirrors almost word for word Engels' idea, that there is interaction on the basis of economic necessity. Hegel says: 'To make for example the manners of the Spartans the cause of their constitution and their constitution conversely the cause of their manners may no doubt be in a way correct

⁵¹ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 417.

⁵² *Selected Correspondence*, p. 467.

⁵³ *Selected Works*, p. 623.

⁵⁴ *Encyclopaedia—The Logic*, p. 265.

But as we have comprehended neither the manners nor the constitution of the nation, the result of such reflections can never be final or satisfactory. The satisfactory point will be reached only when these two, as well as all other, special aspects of Spartan life and Spartan history are seen to be founded in the notion. This pure self-reciprocation is therefore necessity unveiled or realized.⁵⁵

Thus in both Hegel and Engels a hidden empiricist problematic can be detected at work. The 'concept' is constantly in danger of being deformed by the rich texture of 'reality', but in the long run always manages to assert itself. The latent tug of empiricism is expressively suggested in Engels' disarming statement that; 'It is no longer a question anywhere of inventing interconnections from out of our brains, but of discovering them in the facts.'⁵⁶ History becomes a dualist combination of the rational and the empirical. The empirical richness of history is not destroyed or reduced to its fundamental law, but is reproduced as a dialectical interaction between an 'inner' principle and 'outer' shell.

Engels, Lenin and the whole Marxist tradition have derided Kant for his notion of the thing-in-itself, because it makes reality unknowable and thus contradicts any materialist principle of knowledge. There is, however, a more subtle but no less dangerous implication in the Hegelian theory of knowledge—that everything in reality is, in principle at least, *already* known. Engels concealed in his dialectic of necessity and accident, an actual dialectic between knowledge and ignorance. He thereby unintentionally converted the infant science of historical materialism into the appearance of a finished system, a corpus of absolute knowledge which encompassed the whole of empirical reality and raised accident itself into a scientific principle.

The Political Lacunae of the Later Engels

Perhaps what has been said will go some way towards explaining a paradox in the career of the later Engels. It has often been claimed, especially by social-democratic historians, that Engels moved towards parliamentarianism and reformism in his last years, abandoning the revolutionary perspectives of his youth. There is no evidence whatever for this in any subjective or personal testimony on Engels' part. On the contrary, as he wrote to Trier in 1889; 'We are agreed on this: that the proletariat cannot conquer its political domination, the only door to the new society, *without violent revolution*.'⁵⁷ There is also his well-known letter to *Neue Zeit*, denouncing Kautsky for cutting his preface to the *Class Struggles in France* in such a way as to suggest that the peaceful road was not merely present tactics but a fundamental revision of principles. Above all, there were his repeated warnings in articles and letters that Marxism was not an economic reductionism and his reiterated insistence on the fundamental importance for it of the State. At the end of one of his letters to Schmidt, after running through

⁵⁵ *Encyclopaedia—The Logic*, pp. 281-2.

⁵⁶ *Selected Works*, p. 631.

⁵⁷ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 409.

the historical and philosophical arguments which we have already discussed, he asks, 'why do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat, if political power is economically impotent?'.⁵⁸

On the other hand, there is certainly an objective ambiguity to be explained in a revolutionary leader who could write passages like these: (1) 'This same large-scale industry has brought into being, in the bourgeoisie, a class which has the monopoly of all the instruments of production and means of subsistence, but which in each speculative boom period and in each crash that follows it, proves that it has become incapable of any longer controlling the productive forces, which have grown beyond its power; a class under whose leadership society is racing to ruin like a locomotive whose jammed safety-valve, the drives is too weak to open. In other words, the reason is that both the productive forces created by the modern capitalist mode of production and the system of the distribution of goods established by it, have come into crying contradiction with that mode of production itself, and in fact to such a degree that, if the whole of modern society is not to perish, a revolution in the mode of production and distribution must take place.'⁵⁹ (2) 'As long as the oppressed classes, in our case, therefore, the proletariat, is not yet ripe to emancipate itself, it will in its majority regard the existing order of society as the only one possible and, politically, will form the tail of the capitalist class, its extreme left wing. To the extent however, that this class matures for self-emancipation, it constitutes itself as its own party and elects its own representatives, and not those of the capitalists. Thus universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and will not be anything in the present day state; but that is sufficient. *On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know what to do.*'⁶⁰ (3) 'It is now, almost to the year, sixteen centuries since a dangerous party of overthrow was like wise active in the Roman empire. It undermined religion and all the foundations of the state . . . it was without a fatherland, was international; it spread over all countries of the empire . . . (in the army) even the wonted barrack bullying of their superior officers was fruitless. The emperor Diocletian could no longer quietly look on . . . He interfered energetically . . . He promulgated an anti-Socialist—beg pardon, meant to say anti-Christian—law . . . The exceptional law was also without effect. The Christians tore it down from the walls with scorn . . . then the latter (Diocletian) revenged himself by the great persecution of Christians in the year 303 of our era. It was the last of its kind. And it was so effective that 17 years later the army consisting overwhelmingly of Christians, and the succeeding autocrat of the whole Roman empire called the Great, by the priests, proclaimed Christianity the state religion.'⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Selected Correspondence*, p. 424.

⁵⁹ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 189.

⁶⁰ Engels, *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in *Selected Works*, p. 589.

⁶¹ Engels, *Introduction to the Class Struggles in France*, in *Selected Works* (two-volume edition), Moscow 1962, Vol. I, pp. 137–8.

What these texts indicate, more than anything else, is not reformism, but the lack of any theory of the political instance of social formations. It should be emphasized that this lacuna, and its consequences, was not confined to Engels. Marx himself never produced a coherent theory of the political superstructures of capitalist social formations; and he too was responsible for formulations fully as equivocal as those of Engels cited above, in fact if anything even more so. Thus in 1852, he could write that: 'Universal suffrage is the equivalent of political power for the working-class of England . . . Its inevitable result, here, is the political supremacy of the working-class.'⁶² Marx never retracted this judgment; indeed he expressly confirmed its substance twenty years later, after the experience of the Paris Commune itself. Addressing the Hague Congress of the First International in 1872, he declared: 'We do not deny that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland if I knew your institutions better, where the working-people may achieve their goal by peaceful means.'⁶³ These disarming formulations make it clear that Engels never 'revised' the heritage of Marx. Yet it would be absurd to argue that Marx was not a passionate revolutionary to the end of his days, and no-one has ever done so. The confusions of some of Engels' later texts cannot in any way, therefore, be counterposed to the legacy of Marx, and in no sense reflect any weakening of Engels' profoundly-rooted revolutionary convictions. They reflect, rather, a *theoretical* limit to the—unfinished—work of both Marx and Engels at the close of the 19th century. The absence, on the theoretical plane, of any mechanism to connect the determination in the last instance by the economy and the relative autonomy of superstructures, was reproduced on the political plane in an inability to produce a systematic theory of revolutionary politics. Instead, this absence was largely displaced into the one domain where a firmly based scientific theory had been established—the theory of the capitalist mode of production found in *Capital*. Thus the basic contradiction traversing this domain—that between the forces and relations of production—was made to bear the whole weight of what should have been a regional theory of class struggle. It is not surprising, in this sense, that Bernstein imagined that he had discovered a 'break-down' theory in historical materialism.⁶⁴ The residual role implicitly assigned by Engels in the passages cited above to the political parties of the proletariat, was formally resolved but actually evaded by a tacit recourse to Hegel. The proletariat seems merely to register the growing exacerbations of the basic contradiction between the forces and relations of production; the working-class appears to be simply the means through which this contradiction achieves self-consciousness, rather in the way that the Absolute becomes self-consciousness through man at the end of Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

It was not that Engels jettisoned his revolutionary beliefs in the later years of his life. On the contrary, he remained a fervent and unwavering fighter for the cause of the proletariat down to his death.

⁶² K. Marx, 'The Chartist', in D. Fernbach (ed), *Surveys from Exile—Marx's Political Writings, Vol. II* (Penguin, forthcoming), p. 264.

⁶³ Marx-Engels, *On Britain*, Moscow 1962, pp. 494–5.

⁶⁴ See Colletti's essay on Bernstein, *From Revisionism to Lenin*, pp. 45–108.

Theoretically, however, his inability adequately to think through the novelty of historical materialism as a science led him to an understandable attempt to fill in the gaps with philosophy—the Hegelian philosophy of his youth. There is no doubt that Marx (who had shared a youthful Hegelianism) approved this attempt, unambiguously endorsing the *Anti-Dühring*. But, as we have seen, there was no inconsistency between Hegel's 'method' and his 'system'. Therefore, in borrowing Hegel's 'method', Engels found himself, despite himself, an unconscious prisoner of the assumptions of the 'system'.

The Politics of Subjectivity Slogans of the American New Left

The intensive and extensive interest in psychology is too vast to characterize; it includes those who seek relief from a malaise with society as well as disenchanted radicals who seek an alternative to the impoverishment of past political praxis; and this only begins the list. The very size and diversity of the list, however, if it resists characterization, promotes one conclusion: psychology is not a passing fad on the fringes of society; rather it is deeply entangled in the social reality. For this reason any study of psychology must simultaneously study the society and culture of which it is a part. The shift in social attention towards psychology is no accident, it testifies to a shift in the social structure itself. In baldest terms, the individual psyche commands attention exactly because it is undergoing fragmentation and petrification; the living substance known as the individual is hardening. The autonomous ego—always problematic—proves to be no match for the social collectivity which has at its call alternatively brute force, jobs, television, or the local newspaper. This is no conspiracy; rather it is ingrained in the *social* relations which both nourish and poison *human* relations. What haunts

the living is the spectre of individual and psychic suffocation; this is the spectre that a conformist psychology seeks to put to rest.

Within psychology new theories and therapies replace old ones at an accelerating rate. In a dynamic society Freud is too old to be a fashion, too new to be a classic. The phenomenon of the newer replacing the new is not confined to psychology; it is true in all realms of thought. The new not only surpasses the old, but displaces and dislodges it. The ability as well as the desire to remember atrophies. Most of the social sciences turn radically ahistorical; one hardly studies Hegel within philosophy, Freud within psychology, Marx within economics, and so on.

To those who accept the premise of a dynamic society, this is proof of progress and vitality. The truth of such a premise, however, is in doubt. Dynamism can be perpetual motion without movement. In question is whether within the dynamism there does not inhere a static moment: the structure of society. The evident acceleration of production and consumption in the economic sphere, and hysteria and frenzy in life itself, does not preclude that it is the same spinning faster and faster. If this is true, the application of planned obsolescence to thought itself has the same merit as its application to consumer goods; the new is not only shoddier than the old, it fuels an obsolete social system that staves off its replacement by manufacturing the illusion it is perpetually new.

The Proper Task of Theory

The American new left has not been untouched by subjective reductionism. The very effort to think through and back which in different forms belongs to the best of Marxist and psychoanalytic theory is undermined by a crisis of the individual that can only think about itself. Evidence of this is everywhere: on the left as well as in revisionist and conformist psychology. This crisis is no fraud; the chill of the social relations cuts into the core of the individual. The effort to keep psychically warm, to alleviate the coldness that seeps in, shunts aside any time or need for sustained thought or theory. Yet because the left is a left it retains a social analysis of society. The very problem, however, is that this analysis degenerates more and more into slogans, thoughtless finds of the moment. Fetishized subjectivity attracts magnetically fetishized slogans that serve more to sort out one's friends and enemies than figure out the structure of reality. This is a dynamic that keeps bourgeois society rattling along; the very breathing space that could give life to theory is lost in the desperate search for life itself. This search without theory mimics death: reified activity. It grooves along in the ruts of bourgeois society.

The defence of theory, however, if not boring, is suspect: it serves no purpose. Citations from Lenin on the importance of revolutionary theory for a revolutionary movement as a response to this change are insufficient. Rather theory if it is to become a force must comprehend why it is not; it is obliged to study not only a left that has junked theory, but a 'counter-culture'—and culture—that has phased out books and words for images and feelings. Talk of a revolution

'counter-culture' is the gab of the culture industry itself—if investigations into the nature of the prevailing culture is foresworn. What is unique to the left is common to the establishment, at least the vanguard of the establishment. The left duplicates as well as negates bourgeois culture. To illuminate the former one must look at the latter.

The duplications, as with other psychological and social thoughts, take the form of forgetting. This renders discussion of trends in the left doubly irrelevant; not only is such a discussion distant from the immediate needs of the individual, but it is obsolete, discussing political thought and slogans that have already been discarded and forgotten; so rapidly does the left change today. Evidently this is already part of the problem; attending to the emergency of the individual has absorbed sustained political theory; the slogans that replace theory shift with the moment. The shifts are not done through choice and thought, but 'automatically', thoughtlessly and unconsciously. If the latest political opinions are improvements over former ones, they have not surpassed, but more or less forgotten them. They pass as they arose, uncritically—and promise to return. Thinking falls under the spell of fashion: change without change. If ideas such as 'smash monogamy' are not promoted in certain circles with the same vigour as previously, this does not mean they have been subject to criticism and transcended, but simply dropped, to be elsewhere and later recycled and re-used. Inasmuch as this discarding and forgetting appears as a continual or at least continuing process, an examination of slogans and thoughts, even if they are obsolete—which is by no means clear—may indicate the forces that are hardly obsolete; they are as vital as bourgeois society.

Again to be repeated; this analysis is not intended to equate development within the left proper with those outside it, as if the two cancelled each other out, confirming the wisdom that it is best to do nothing. That a left and a non-left participate in the same drive towards subjectivity is only proof of the virulence of bourgeois society, not of the meaninglessness of political distinctions. Further, it need hardly be said, the left itself is more and more fragmented; these thoughts are concerned with *trends*, which tend to exert themselves, but are obviously not evident everywhere; such an analysis does not claim universal validity. Also it should be noted, it is impossible to discuss the left without drawing material from the women's movement, weathermen, etc. It would violate the very spirit and intent to read this as an indictment of specific groups. At best one could say certain groups express with greater clarity trends that are present everywhere. But nothing more; neither that such developments are restricted to particular groups, or more outrageously, that these groups brought them about. Here, as elsewhere, what is in question is society as a whole.

The rejection of theory is grounded explicitly or implicitly in the affirmation of subjectivity. Theory seems politically impotent and personally unreal and irrelevant. Only human subjectivity—the personal—seems real and potent; the personal, it is said, is political, the political personal. The identity of the two eliminates the need to pursue either separately. Theory and objective thought make way for human relations, feelings, intuitions. The immediacy of these cuts to the quick of

the core of theory and thought: mediacy. The presence of the here and now in the form of subjective feelings banishes thoughts to after-thoughts. It instils an immediacy that stills reflection.

The promise that a focus on human subjectivity could harbour is lost if no attention is given to its place within bourgeois society in general. Here the relation of phenomena within and outside a left is at once critical and fluid. For the cult of human subjectivity *per se* is not the negation of bourgeois society but its substance. Yet against a Marxist dogma that proscribed all subjectivity its articulation within the left was progress; but as an exclusive pursuit it courts regression that constitutes bourgeois society's own progress. The fetish of subjectivity and human relationships is progress in fetishism. The rejection of theory seeking insight into objectivity in favour of subjective feelings reconstitutes a suspect Cartesian tradition in the reverse: I feel, therefore I am. The inner drive of bourgeois society was to throw the human subject back on itself. Descartes himself thought no other. 'My third maxim was to endeavour always to conquer myself rather than fortune, and to change my desires rather than the order of the world . . .'¹ Human subjectivity was left to shift for itself: to examine and transform the self, not the universe of the self. To prescribe more subjectivity as aid to the damaged subject is to prescribe the illness as the cure.

The wholesale rejection of theory incurs the constitutional failing of the individual retailer; apparently free to buy and sell he is a victim of objective laws without knowing them. The private individual free to pick and choose was a joke from the beginning; not only the allotments were already picked and chosen, but the contents of the choice followed the dictates of the social not individual world. 'The private interest is already a particular social interest and it is only within the given social conditions and given social means that it can be pursued. It is the interest of the private individual, but its contents, like the form and means of development, are determined by independent social conditions.'² The individual as an autonomous being was ideology even as bourgeois society announced it. The unemployed, like the employed, were to think their lack of luck, like their luck, was due to private abilities, and not fated by the social whole. No less are the private hopes, desires, and nightmares cued by public and social forces. The social does not 'influence' the private; it dwells within it. It is above all necessary to avoid postulating "society" once again as an abstraction confronting the individual. The individual is the *social being*.³

The Trap of Radical Subjectivity

The fetish of human relations, responses, emotions, perpetuates the myth; abstracted from the social whole they appear as the individualized responses of free men and women to particular situations, and not, as they are, the dehuman responses to a non-human world. A rat

¹ Descartes, *Discours on Method*, pt. III.

² Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 74.

³ Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 'Private Property and Communism,' pt. VI (all editions).

psychology befits humans only when a suffocating world has transformed men and women into rats. The endless talk about human relations and responses is Utopian; it assumes what is obsolete or yet to be realized: *human* relations. Today they are inhuman; they partake more of rats than humans, things than people. And not because of bad will but because of an evil world. To forget this is to indulge in the ideology of sensitivity groups that work to de-sensitize by cutting off human relations from the social roots that have made them brutal. More sensitivity today means revolution or madness. The rest is chatter.

The cult of subjectivity is a direct response to its eclipse. The more authentic human experience and relationships disappear, the more they are invoked—for exactly that reason. Autobiographical accounts replace thoughts because autobiographies as the history of a unique individual ceases to exist. 'To get in touch with one's feelings'—a slogan picked up by parts of the women's movement—is to affirm an individual existence already suspect. Self and mutual affirmation and confirmation seek to recall an individualized experience that is a social memory. The atomized particle known as the individual salvages itself as advertising peddles its identical wares: by emphasizing differences that long ago were unreal.

The exclusive pursuit of subjectivity insures its decline. Not against the drive of bourgeois society but in tune with it, it takes a social product as a private woe or Utopia. That parts of the women's movement made subjectivity programmatic, repudiating all objective theoretical thought, indicates only the extent to which the revolt recapitulates the oppression: women allegedly incapable of thought and systematic thinking but superior in sentiments and feelings repeated this in their very rebellion. Yet the point is not to resuscitate an official orthodoxy that eliminated any role for the subject. Since Lukács and Reich, and others, viable Marxist thought has worked precisely against this orthodoxy; but here it was not a question of advancing pure subjectivity, rather of restoring a subject-object dialectic. The alternatives of pure subjectivity and pure objectivity are the alternatives of bourgeois thought itself. Marxist and radical thought must use another logic, dialectical logic.

The promise of radical subjectivity to escape political and personal irrelevancy is unfulfilled. While it was positive progress against an older 'objective' Stalinist orthodoxy—which progress here will simply be noted but not elaborated—it repeated in reverse the same sins: an indifference toward the actual content of bourgeois society that perpetuates this content. 'The passage to theory-less praxis was motivated by the objective impotence of theory,' wrote Adorno, 'and multiplied that impotence by the isolation and fetishization of the subjective moment of the historical movement . . .'⁴ Subjectivity that forsakes sustained theory gravitates towards slogans that are not the crystallizations of discussion and thought but secretions of the existing society. Under the sway of immediacy slogans are accepted as coughed up by bourgeois society. As such they do not serve to popularize thought, but replace it. From 'armed struggle' to 'smash monogamy' they are not

⁴ T. W. Adorno, 'Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis,' *Sichsworte*, Frankfurt 1969, p. 177.

wrong in themselves, but wrong in so far as they are blank labels indifferent, or rather antagonistic, toward content. They are to be applied anywhere and everywhere, as if indifference toward the particular content was the hallmark of revolutionary theory and not its negation. Blindness toward content is the social logic of a society that deals in exchange values: how much? The logic of revolution must be another logic—the recognition of the particular and its social context: concrete dialectical thought. No matter, their tone blank categories of affirmation or condemnation on armed struggle, the third world, leadership, men, and the rest, repeat not resist the inner mechanism of this society. The preservation of concrete dialectical analysis, even in idealistic form—to follow Lenin—makes it closer to dialectical materialism than vulgar materialism that is blind and indifferent. The former in its loyalty to the particular preserves what a crude materialism deaf, dumb, and blind to distinctions loses.

‘Smash Monogamy’

The political content of the slogan of ‘smash monogamy’ is of particular interest: to be examined is the extent such a slogan resisted the drive of bourgeois society, or appearances notwithstanding, seconded it. From the start it suggests a violence that is hardly commensurate with its object, as if the forces out to sustain bourgeois monogamy were to do so with cannon and gun. Rather to ‘smash’ monogamy is to smash something weak and frail, already despised and hated, openly or secretly, by many. The popular ridicule that surrounds marriage indicates the historical judgment on an institution that persists illogically in the face of its own refutation. The open scorn and ridicule reveals the profound ambiguity of bourgeois society towards its own product: maintaining marriage as a means of transmitting authority while suspecting it to be obsolete.

In fact, as discussed above, the bourgeois family—and bourgeois monogamy—as instruments of authority are being eclipsed by more efficient means; schools, television, etc, that bypass the family. The father as the wielder of the absolute power of condemnation or inheritance is being phased out. The erosion of the economic content of the family unit ultimately saps its authoritarian structure in favour of complete fragmentation. Important in this context is that the family in its ‘classic’ form was not merely a tool of society, but contained an anti-authoritarian moment. The family as an independent and (relatively) isolated unit preserved a ‘space’ in which the individual could develop *against* the society; as a mediator of authority, and not merely an instrument of it, it resisted as well as complied. It supplied an intellectual, and sometimes physical refuge which is the source of resistance. The notion—practically extinct?—that you can always come home echoes this role of protection offered against the forms of social domination. Within this space, the family relationships not only partook of the prevailing inhumanity, but preserved the possibility of something else and better. In contradiction to public life, in the family where the relations are not mediated through the market and the individuals do not confront each other as competitors, the possibility exists for men and women to act not merely as functions, but as

individuals.⁵ The use of 'sisters and brothers' by the new left itself recalled the solidarity that at least for a moment was nurtured in the family.

That the family—and monogamy—was a form of humanity as well as a form of inhumanity is crucial to the Marxist critique. To lose this dialectic was to invite regression; it was to fall behind bourgeois monogamy, not realizing the human moment in monogamy, but eradicating it in favour of a new and repressive equality. It is this notion of equality that fuels and inspires the critique—and hatred—for monogamy, as well as that of privilege and exclusion in general. It belongs to the bourgeoisie's most progressive and regressive programme; progressive in its democratic content against feudal privilege, and regressive in that it is ultimately grounded in the market of 'equal' exchange, and works to further the domain of the market. This equality is abstract as money is abstract; knowing neither quality nor content, it registers only numbers. In its indifference toward the actual content of life, a critique sustained by equality signals its bourgeois ideal 'that tolerates nothing qualitatively different'.⁶

In different guises—always resisted by Marx—it emerged within and outside Marxism, as in critiques of wage-labour, classes, private property—and monogamy. The substance of such critiques was directed towards forms of inequality, and it sought only equalization or democratization. In seeing only privilege and inequalities it worked to level—capitalism's own task. In losing the dialectical moment, it regressed; not the abolition of classes but their equalization,⁷ not the abolition of capitalist property but its democratization, not the abolition of wage-labour but its extension to all, were programmes based on a bourgeois ideal of equality. Equality fixated on forms forgot the content that was inhuman equal or not. A critique of capitalist property inspired solely by equality suggests only an equality of domination, not its end.

Rather bourgeois property contains both human and inhuman moments, as does bourgeois monogamy. Marcuse's essay on Marx's *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* is emphatic on this: Marxism seeks the abolition of *alienated* labour and *class* property, not 'labour' and 'property' which is the praxis of free men and women.⁸

It rejects both of the abstract alternatives that a critique founded on equality proposes: the abolition of all property—primitive communism—or its extension as wage-labour to all—Utopia as a workgang. Rather Marxism seeks to realize the human and individual moment in labour and property that goes beyond formal equality. Marx ridiculed those who saw communism as the abolition or equalization of all

⁵ M. Horkheimer, 'Autorität und Familie,' *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft*, Band I, Frankfurt, 1968, p. 346.

⁶ T. W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, Frankfurt, 1970, p. 148.

⁷ See Marx's comments on Bakunin's program, Marx-Engels *Werke*, XVIII (Berlin, 1969), p. 14f.

⁸ Herbert Marcuse, 'The Foundation of Historical Materialism', *Studies in Critical Philosophy*, London 1972, pp. 1-48.

property. In his piece on the Commune, he wrote, 'the Commune, they explain, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property . . . It wanted to make individual property a truth.'⁹ Or in the *Manifesto*: with the end of capitalism 'personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class character.'¹⁰

The Regressive Critique of Capitalism

A passage in the *Manuscripts* is the fullest discussion of the communism that would not end capitalism, but would universalize it by equalizing it. To Marx it is no accident that the key to such communism is its critique of bourgeois monogamy. The passage is worth citing in full: Primitive communism 'wants to destroy *everything* which is not capable of being possessed by all as *private property*. It wants to do away by force with talent, etc. For it the sole purpose of life and existence is direct physical *possession*. The task of the labourer is not done away with, but extended to all men . . . Finally the movement of opposing universal property to private property finds expression in the animal form of opposing to *marriage* (certainly a form of *exclusive private property*) the *communism of women*, in which a woman becomes a piece of *communal* and *common* property. It may be said that this idea of the *communism of women* gives away the *secret* of this as yet completely crude and thoughtless communism. Just as a woman passes from marriage to general prostitution, so the entire world of wealth (that is, of man's objective substance) passes from the relationships of exclusive marriage with the owner of private property to a state of universal prostitution with the community. In negating the *personality* of man in every sphere, this type of communism is really its negation. General *envy* constituting itself as a power is the disguise in which *greed* re-establishes itself . . . In the form of envy and the urge to reduce things to a common level . . . this . . . even constitutes the *essence* of competition. The crude communism is only the culmination of this envy and of this leveling-down proceeding.'¹¹

The full content of the regressive critique of capitalism is here articulated; founded on the bourgeois notion of equality, and in part driven by envy and resentment, it works to spread capitalism, as opposed to ending it. Blind to content, it registers only privilege and exclusion and seeks formal equality. The denunciation of leadership, theory, talent, relationship between two people or between a man and a woman as forms of exclusion and privilege—participates in this 'thoughtless' communism. Privilege seen only as a violation of equality is privilege seen through the eyes of the bourgeoisie. 'The developed modern state is not based . . . on a society of privileges but on a society in which *privileges are abolished and dissolved* . . . Free industry and free trade abolish privileged exclusivity . . . and set man free from privilege . . . they produce the universal struggle of man against man, individual against

⁹ Marx, *Civil War in France*, New York 1940, p. 61.

¹⁰ cf. Marx, *Capital* I, Moscow 1961, p. 763.

¹¹ Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 'Private Property and Communism,' IV.

individual . . .'¹² The logic of equality that sustains these critiques of exclusion and privilege is the logic of the market itself. It seeks to level—a Utopia of complete pulverization of human relations and interchangeability of individuals. The universalization of alienation, not its abolition, is its unconscious goal; it promises as liberation an equality of domination.

The point is not the mindless defence of bourgeois monogamy, bourgeois property, leadership, etc. Rather it is to understand their dialectical content which will make their abolition not regressive but progressive; it is to understand their human as well as inhuman content; monogamy not simply as mutual oppression, but the attempt at a sustained relationship between two people; theory not simply as elitism, but as necessary insight into objective reality; leadership not simply as manipulation but as a rational form of organization. The inability or refusal to grasp the dialectical content makes talk about their abolition suspect, and the more so, the open resentment; it expresses the desire to break down privilege and exclusion not so as to liberate but to share the spoils. The envy which would destroy in the name of freedom is too often apparent, e.g. communal groups which systematically set out to destroy exclusive relationships as threats to their own. The endless talk about human relations within the insular group works to promote group domination; it flushes out the last hiding place.

De Sade and the Logic of Total Equality

The critique of unique and exclusive relationships as crimes against democracy and equality has been formulated by bourgeois society's own advanced representatives, notably de Sade. The human individual—and body—is rendered totally functional, subject to all and everything. The progressive and regressive elements of bourgeois society have rarely been so clearly articulated: equality and democracy serve as a critique of privilege so as to make way for mutual and equal domination. The indifference towards the actual human content of relationships makes de Sade's programme at one with the bourgeoisie's own dream of liberation: liberation as a spree in the bargain-basement of human sexuality. In *Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans*, he proposed: 'Never may an act of possession be exercised upon a free being; the exclusive possession of a woman is no less unjust than the possession of slaves; all men are born free; all have equal rights; never should we lose sight of those principles; according to which never may there be granted to one sex the legitimate right to lay monopolizing hands upon the other, and never may one of these sexes or classes arbitrarily possess the other . . . Love which may be termed the *soul's madness*, is no more than a trifle by which their constancy may be justified: Love, satisfying two persons only, the beloved and the loving, cannot serve the happiness of others, and it is for the sake of the happiness of everyone, and not for egotistical and privileged happiness that women have been given to us. All men therefore have an equal right of enjoyment of all women . . .'

¹² Marx, Engels, *The Holy Family*, Moscow 1956, p. 156-7.

That this is not just an equality of women for men, but all for all is clear: 'If we admit . . . that all women ought to be subjugated to our desires we may certainly allow them ample satisfaction of theirs . . . I would have them accorded the enjoyment of all sexes, and, as in the case of men, the enjoyment of all parts of the body; and under the special clause prescribing their surrender to all who desire them, there must be subjoined another guaranteeing them a similar freedom to enjoy all they seem worthy to satisfy them.'¹³

This is the full content of the bourgeois equality and democracy unfolded: a Utopia of total fragmentation and mutual exploitation. The rights championed are the rights of money that has been doled out to all; alienation is transcended by universalizing it. As such, these rights, like equality, are informed by the market—and forget it; focusing on the abstract, they leave to one side the concrete economic content. 'Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society . . .'¹⁴ The rights advanced of late by parts of the left—rights of homosexuals, of control over one's body, etc—participate in the same dialectic of bourgeois equality and rights; they are both progress in freedom and progress in domination. The right to free labour was the right to wage-slavery. The right of freedom of speech is the right to read a mass-produced newspaper. Their essential content was dictated by the economic-social structure of society, not by the formal and abstract rights and equalities. And yet they were progress—against self labour and state-run newspapers. So too were the newer rights championed.

This is not to argue that they are not worth struggling for; they are—just as wage-labour and freedom of speech were, and are. Yet not to be forgotten is the content; rights do not negate the prevailing society, but extend it. The right to free labour as that to free sex is ironic. It is the freedom of individuality which has already been killed in its substance. It is the gloss of freedom under conditions of its denial. When this content is ignored, then the relationship of these reforms and rights as part of a revolutionary process, but distinct from a revolution that would revolutionize the content itself, is mystified. Where these rights are billed as ends in themselves, the democratization of reification is dubbed its dissolution. The glorification of control over one's own body, group relations, masturbation and the rest confuse equality within alienation with liberation. To romanticize masturbation is to hawk the quintessence of bourgeois society for its negation. The systematic eradication of human relationships has left the decimated subject only with itself. The concept of freedom lies elsewhere; it is anchored in the sustained relation between two individuals; it can transcend and go beyond this—and ultimately must—but cannot bypass it.

Love and the Damaged Subject

It was this moment which was saved in the Marxist 'abolition' of bourgeois monogamy, and why Marx and Engels spoke of monogamy

¹³ De Sade, *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom*, New York 1966, p. 318–19; 321.

¹⁴ Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, New York 1966, p. 10.

being realized, not eradicated. The relation of two individuals, of loved and lover, belongs to the core of human freedom.¹⁵ The positive content of this is unclear, as it must be till the liberated society has arrived.¹⁶ Yet from Marx through the Frankfurt School to the Surrealists and Freud, unique and individual love and relationships have been seen as an element of freedom, of the rejection of bourgeois civilization.

The drive to level, to reduce all to identical monads efficient and adept at shifting relationships with anyone or anything is the form of love of late capitalism. Unique love harbours a threat to this indifferent and collective form, be it fabricated by bourgeois society or accepted by parts of the left. Eros is lethal for the repressive collective, and ultimately lethal for the lovers. The etymological link between (love) potion and poison indicates the psychological and historical one. Two people in love in excluding society incite its wrath. 'Two people coming together for the purpose of sexual satisfaction, in so far as they seek solitude are making a demonstration against the herd instinct, the group feeling . . .' wrote Freud.¹⁷ Or elsewhere, 'the antithesis between civilization and sexuality' is derived 'from the circumstances that sexual love is a relationship between two individuals in which a third can only be superfluous or disturbing, whereas civilization depends on relationships between a considerable number of individuals.'¹⁸ With Max Horkheimer, the unique relationship between two individuals is the hallmark of freedom against a society that sells sexuality like patent medicine. 'Realistic science has objectified sex till it is manipulative . . . In the mass society the sexes are levelled so that they both relate to their sex as a thing, over which they control coldly and without illusion.' Resistance is elsewhere. 'The lovers are those which preserve neither themselves nor the collective. In disregarding themselves, they earn its anger. Romeo and Juliet die against a society for that which it itself proclaims. In so far as they unreasonably sacrifice themselves, they assert the freedom of the individual against the domination of property.'¹⁹

If the intensification of subjectivity is a direct response to its actual decline, it ultimately works to further this demise. It accepts the damaged subject as its own doing, and proposes more of the same. The objective loss of human relationships and experience is eased by their endless pursuit. A cult of subjectivity—complete with drugs—dopes the discontented into taking their own death—figuratively and in fact—for life itself. The immediacy of it all drives out mediacy of any of it.

¹⁵ See the letter of Marx to Jenny Marx cited in Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, London 1971, p. 133. 'But the love not for Feuerbachian Man, not for Molechottian Stoffwechsel, not for the proletariat, but the love for a lover, and particularly for you, makes a man again a man.'

¹⁶ Yet if Utopian thought is in order there is nowhere better to turn than to the most determined foe of bourgeois monogamy and civilization, Fourier, and especially his long suppressed work, *La Nouvelle Manière d'Amour*, Paris 1967. Of particular interest in his notion of 'pivotal love', p. 290f: a love relation that is neither 'simple fidelity' nor indifferent and brutal inter-changeability.

¹⁷ Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, New York 1960, p. 93.

¹⁸ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontent* (New York 1961), p. 55.

¹⁹ M. Horkheimer, 'Vernunft und Selbsterhaltung,' *Autoritärer Staat*, Amsterdam 1968, pp. 111, 113.

Sustained political and theoretical thought is not simply rejected, but forgotten. The slogans and rhetoric that replace it are necessarily abstract and formal, like the society that tossed them up.

The tone of the slogans notwithstanding, their complicity with bourgeois society is barely hidden: indifference toward content. Blank non-dialectical concepts too often fired by resentment and envy perpetuate the essential content of this society. A critique of monogamy, theory, leadership, relationships between two people, as forms of exclusion and privilege is a critique that falls behind bourgeois society, not advances over it; it is akin to the 'thoughtless' communism outlined by Marx. What is perpetually lost under the sway of immediacy is a dialectical analysis: monogamy as both human and inhuman—as the bad refuge from a worse world and a bad solution for a better world; theory as insight into objectivity as well as elitism. To see only one moment is to gain the worse for the bad: no theory instead of elitist theory, inhuman fragmented relations for damaged human ones. The dialectical path is elsewhere.

The depletion of political concepts in favour of psychological and subjective ones is a by-product of the scramble for the remnants of human experience. Yet the subjectivization of objective concepts is not the repudiation of the loss of human experience but forms its prehistory. The reduction of the Marxist theory of alienation to a subjective state by bourgeois sociologists has its counterpart on the left in the reduction of oppression to a whim of the individual. Alienation becomes a headache and oppression annoyance. 'I'm oppressed,' announces someone, and that's that.

Inside and outside the left radical subjectivity announces its own end; it resists reification by intensifying it. Hence its totalitarian urge to control everything. Endless talk on human relationships within the closed group promotes domination. Bad subjectivity seeks the bad collective that secures it by annihilating it. 'Collectivism and individualism complete each other in the false.'²⁰ The bourgeois individual whittled down to identical monads pursues its last fragment in and for a public only too anxious to share its remains. The late individual in feeding off each other gains nourishment at the cost of self-destruction. Blank and vacant affirmations or condemnations of the women's movement, men, armed struggle, recent political and personal events serve as tools of interpersonal relations. Thought is reduced to slogans and slogans to symbols of mutuality and self-confirmation.

Rampant narcissism surfaces as the final form of bourgeois individualism; it at once negates the ego and perpetuates its mangled form. Lex conceptions of guilt, of the universal oppression of women by men, of one's 'own' oppression, function as instruments of an ego that is regressing in the face of a disintegrating society. That men too have suffered and died in the massacre of history is affirmed or arrogantly denied, but is in any case irrelevant. What counts is the immediate and here: an economism-turned-feminism is promoted as if the blind

²⁰ T. W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, p. 278.

endorsement of what every worker did or thought is improved when it is as blindly applied to women. Social analysis decays into group loyalty. The jealousy with which the oppression of women, children, homosexuals, etc, is defended as a private preserve off-limits to others expresses an urge to corner the market of oppression akin to the bourgeoisie's own parcelling of it.

Again the point here is not to argue for a return to a 'scientific' objective theory that proscribed any role for the subject; and again: the alternatives of pure subjectivity and pure objectivity is the either/or of bourgeois culture itself. Nor are the practical and communal attempts to overcome the deadly privacy and coldness of bourgeois existence to be rejected. Rather they are to be advanced; but advanced not by a mode of thought and action that damns them to be more of the same. The political and personal praxis that is sustained by bad subjectivity and abstract slogans issues into the very prison that is the bourgeois world. What is to be sought is a concrete subject/object dialectic that reconstructs the new out of the decay; only the praxis that shuns the fetish can hope for liberation. There are no guarantees nor tried-and-tested methods. Mistakes have and will be made; but the efforts must remain continually alive to the tension between the 'personal' and the 'political' without abdicating either nor reducing one to the other.

The line that inspired the Weatherman name suggested one metaphor for the path of theory and praxis; you don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind is blowing. In classical Marxist theory this metaphor indicates opportunism, that is subjectivism or the lack of principles; the willingness to swim with the current be what it may. Obviously Weatherman was a direct repudiation of social-democratic opportunism; not only by their actions and program, but by their courage and dedication. And yet, as argued here they as others unwittingly collapsed into subjectivity and abstract sloganeering that is part and parcel of bourgeois society itself. The Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness* suggested another metaphor for revolutionary theory and praxis; he wrote there of the sailor. The sailor, like the weatherman, takes exact readings from the wind—but with a decisive difference, 'without letting the wind determine his direction, on the contrary, he defies and exploits it so as to hold fast to his original course.'²¹

²¹ G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, London 1971, p. 262.

review

The Kapetanios

Two events—the April 1967 military *coup d'état* and the outbreak in April 1968 of the rift in the Communist Party—have opened a new period in Greek politics. They have also focused international attention on the situation in Greece. The circles of opinion that registered the impact of these events were not, of course, identical, the April coup affecting a far broader circle than the communist party rift. As a departure from the past, however, and as an omen for the future, the latter event may in the long run prove more significant than the former. It is, in any case, important enough to justify a new look at the history of the communist party and the revolutionary struggle in Greece.

*The Kapetanios*¹ is essentially an attempt at such a new look. In the sense that it offers a systematic critique of the record of the Greek communist leadership between 1941 and 1949 (with an epilogue which extends the critique to 1967), and by virtue of the fact that it presents the views of dissident members of that leadership registered while the events which led to the defeat of the revolution in Greece were still taking shape, Eudes' book constitutes an important political event first and foremost for the Greek Left. But its interest is not exclusively Greek. The torment of the Communist Party of Greece and those who followed it is inextricably connected with political events and currents of history of much wider than Greek dimensions. Events like the October 1944 Stalin–Churchill understanding on spheres of influence, the February 1945 Yalta agreements, the start of the Cold War and the Truman Doctrine of March 1947, and the Stalin–Tito clash all had immediate repercussions on the course of events in Greece. From the point of view of a British public, finally, this book has particular interest in that it was Britain, which acted as the predominant foreign power on the Greek scene, in contest with Nazi Germany in the 1940–4 period and in conflict with the Greek people and its national resistance movement,

¹ Dominique Eudes, *The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece 1943–1949*, NLB, 1972.

EAM, in the 1944-7 period. In fact, British imperialist policies were the main cause both of the defeat of the Greek communists and of the subjugation of the Greek people to a reactionary regime whose most recent product is the 1967 military dictatorship.

Eudes begins his story with the emergence, in the summer and autumn of 1942, of ELAS, the National Popular Liberation Army, a guerrilla force which sprang up as a response to the Nazi occupation of Greece (1941-4) but soon assumed the character both of a national liberation movement and (since its leadership was in the hands of the Communist Party of Greece), socially revolutionary force. ELAS was the military arm of EAM, the National Liberation Front, which was also communist-controlled. The resistance record of these two organizations was a brilliant one. EAM grew to be a political organization encompassing millions of members. Its prestige and authority made it the virtual wartime government of occupied Greece, which prevented collaborationist politicians from gaining any sort of foothold among the Greek people. This, in its turn, had the further consequence that Greek resources in manpower and, to a large extent, also in materials, were forbidden to the Nazis throughout the war. Of all countries of occupied Europe, Greece has the distinction of being the only one which sent neither workers to German factories nor expeditionary forces to fight on the Eastern Front. How the former of these feats was achieved, despite a mobilization order of the German military commander of South-Eastern Europe, is related in Eudes' book (pp. 33ff). It is, to say the least, remarkable that EAM, under a ferocious foreign occupation, was able to force the Nazi government to officially quash its labour mobilization order, by means of mass demonstrations in Athens which assumed almost insurrectional dimensions.

It was EAM which created the political climate which enabled ELAS to move among the Greek people like Mao's famous fish in the water. This is not to say that ELAS did not generate its own momentum or that its action did not have important feedback effects on EAM. But the political organization, EAM and the popular army ELAS fought side by side and mutually complemented each other. From the strictly military point of view ELAS, on the estimate of Field-Marshal Alexander (Eudes p. 208), had managed to pin down in Greece between six and seven divisions, in addition to the equivalent of four on the Greek islands. These forces the Nazis were unable to use on the main operational theatres. In addition ELAS undertook specific sabotage operations, planned by the Middle-East Allied Command and executed with the help of British saboteurs parachuted into Greece throughout the occupation. These operations were important, both with regard to hampering the flow of supplies to the German forces in North Africa and in creating a diversion during the Allied landing in Sicily in July 1943—a contribution for which General Wilson, the British Commander of the Middle-East Allied Forces, felt he had to send a special message of congratulations to the Greek guerrillas.

These distinguished services of EAM-ELAS in the Allied cause did not win for them any gratitude on the part of the British government. It was Churchill's view, which prevailed in the British War Cabinet, that

Britain must first and foremost safeguard its long-term political interests in Greece. This implied the restoration of the King of the Hellenes, who had taken refuge in Britain after Greece had been overrun by the *Wehrmacht*. The British Military Mission in occupied Greece was accordingly instructed to support in preference royalist guerrillas. It was unfortunate, from that point of view, that scarcely any such guerrillas were available on the Greek mountains. The only non-communist formation worthy of consideration was EDES headed by Napoleon Zervas who, as a former republican officer, ought in principle to have been as opposed to the return of the king as EAM-ELAS. King George II, and the institution of monarchy in general, were not particularly popular among the Greek people. Moreover, they had lost all claim to legitimacy by openly conniving in the imposition of a fascist-type dictatorship on pre-war Greece, in 1936. No democratic movement emerging from the flames of the Second World War could possibly have tolerated the restoration of such a monarch.

Nevertheless, the British Military Mission in Greece and the British Foreign Service outside Greece managed to assemble a motley crew of former politicians, and to push the careerist Zervas on to pro-royal positions. They thus confronted EAM-ELAS with a Greek opposition which, although representing almost nothing in terms of material strength or popular support inside Greece (let alone their practical non-existence as a resistance force), could nevertheless be vested with British recognition and presented as the prospective government of Greece, with which EAM-ELAS, the actual governing force in Greece during the occupation, ought to come to terms, voluntarily giving up its political and military predominance. Eudes goes so far as to hint at an underhand British-German co-operation during the war, in setting up collaborationist armed units to oppose the guerrillas. The evidence he invokes to support this argument consists of certain statements of the collaborationist Prime Minister John Rallis in his trial after the liberation of Greece, in October 1944, together with certain suspect contacts of one member of the British Military Mission during the occupation. The evidence is not new and cannot take one beyond suspicions. (It is, of course, generally admitted that collaborationist militiamen were widely used against ELAS, with the full support and knowledge of the British representatives in Greece, in the clash that followed the liberation.)

The Greek communist leadership allowed itself to be drawn by Britain into negotiating with the straw men whom British foreign policy put up. They were also prevailed upon to spare the Zervas guerrilla total disbandment, in the name of the common struggle against Nazism. On the basis of these two key concessions, Britain managed to manoeuvre the EAM-ELAS representatives into so weak a position on the front of political negotiations that they were made to accept a government of so-called national unity, under George Papandreou, in which they, the real masters of Greece, the founders of EAM's popular state that had by 1944 liberated the whole of the Greek countryside and represented the only real force in the still occupied cities, were reduced to the position of poor relations. With regard to the armed forces, the programme of the Papandreou government was to disband all guerrilla

forces and absorb the fighters into a new, allegedly national, allegedly non-political army. Such was the content of the so-called Lebanon agreement, reached in May 1944 between an EAM delegation from Free (i.e. guerrilla-liberated) Greece and clutch of former politicians who had fled under British protection to the Middle East, where they offered themselves as willing instruments of British imperialist policy against the Greek people. As the part of the agreement that provided for the formation of a national army proved too manifestly unrealistic, it was supplemented in September 1944 by a further agreement, which provided for the creation of respective zones in which, after the withdrawal of the German troops, the ELAS forces, the EDES forces and the forces of the Papandreou government-in-exile supported by British troops, would take over. ELAS was, of course, excluded from taking over Athens and Salonika, the governing centres of Greece.

These agreements, so overwhelmingly favourable for the non-communist side, were completely out of line with the relation of forces in the country—as far as specifically Greek forces were concerned. Their unreality was obvious to Churchill, who had few illusions as to what he would have to do to prevent Greece staying under the control of EAM-ELAS. As early as September 1943, Churchill had visualized the possibility of an intervention of British troops to impose a government that accorded with British desires and interests. But to realize his plan, Churchill needed the ratification of his other two partners in war, Roosevelt and Stalin. By offering concessions to Stalin in other parts of the Balkans, and particularly in Rumania, Churchill managed to get a free hand in Greece. This allowed him to push Papandreou to a display of intransigence towards EAM-ELAS. The latter, having abdicated its power on paper, found it impossible to swallow the bitter pill of the voluntary disarmament of ELAS in practice. Faced with increasing provocation on the part of its opponents, the communist leadership was pushed to attempt an armed seizure of power in Athens, where it was met with the full force of British military intervention. Despite an heroic month-long struggle by ELAS in Athens, in December 1944 British military superiority eventually won the day. After the communists lost Athens, and despite the fact that they continued to control the rest of Greece, they sought terms. This time the terms were, of course, far stiffer even than those imposed in Lebanon. The communist forces were disarmed and in effect handed over to the mercies of the former collaborators with the Nazis, who launched a fierce repression under the complacent protection of the British forces. It was a matter of months before Greece slid into full civil war. ELAS was then resuscitated, under the name of the Democratic Army, but with only a fraction of its former support among the people. Despite that, it had some initial success. But the scales became definitely tipped against it when the USA decided, in March 1947, to intervene in full force in favour of the anti-communist side. From then on the fate of the communist guerrilla, which received no corresponding support from the USSR, was sealed. The fighting dragged on till the end of 1949, but the communist side was totally defeated. Greece was spared an open military dictatorship in 1950 because of the wish of the United States to save democratic pretences; but an illiberal counter-revolutionary regime (which was in its essential aspects a continuation of the Metaxas regime) nevertheless

emerged from the ashes of the civil war. This régime practised vindictive retaliation and discriminatory treatment against the mass of the Greek left. When, despite this repression it became likely in the early sixties that a more representative government might at last emerge—which would unavoidably have given some real possibilities to the Greek Left—a military *coup d'état* nipped the process in the bud.

This is the general pattern of events against which Eudes develops the theme that gives his book its specific interest. This theme can briefly be summarized as follows. ELAS sprang up, under the impact of the German occupation, as a revolutionary peasant army under popular leaders whom he collectively names the *Kapetanios*. These popular leaders were the representatives of a mighty insurrectional upsurge among the Greek people, and pressed for a policy of maximizing the military advantage of ELAS, without regard to the restraining influence of the British Military Mission and irrespective of the risk of a confrontation with Britain—which they felt had to be faced from a position of as great strength as possible. They were overruled, however, by the leadership of the Greek Communist Party, which did not understand and was even suspicious of the peasant guerrilla, since the latter did not correspond to what Eudes calls the 'canonical' pattern of revolution through an insurrection on the part of the urban proletariat. Needless to say, these communist leaders were Stalinist to the core. They fell into the greatest possible confusion when they realized that Soviet policy had assigned them to the British sphere of influence. Unable to cut loose from their allegiance to the USSR, unable on the other hand to justify their attitude to the Greek people in arms, they vacillated between armed confrontation with their class opponents and seeking what one might call a social-democratic compromise with them. Whenever their desire to serve the general strategy of the Soviet Union took the upper hand, they gave too much ground to Britain. And when, on the other hand, they tried to restore their control of the situation inside Greece by an act of force, they still adopted modes of action based solely on the preconception of an urban revolution, or of a regular army, on the pattern of the Red Army, whereas the situation in Greece called first and foremost for a peasant popular guerrilla. Its endless vacillation caused the communist leadership to mishandle both its social-democratic attempts at compromise and its revolutionary potentialities, so that it ended up with the worst of both worlds. The *Kapetanios*, caught up in this mesh of inconsistency, political ineptness and blunder, shone by their ability to serve the revolutionary cause against desperate odds, despite their inability to make their point of view prevail against an insensitive, dogmatic leadership. But they were isolated, slandered, outmanoeuvred and on some occasions even physically liquidated, by the past-masters of intra-party intrigue.

What are the specific political mistakes with which Eudes charges the Greek communist leadership? First, a refusal to strengthen ELAS to the maximum point during the German occupation. This took the form of keeping in the cities vast human reserves, ready to join the guerrilla, which were deliberately not instructed to do so because of the unilateral emphasis placed on the maintenance of an urban revolutionary force. In this Eudes is undoubtedly right, at least to the extent that the

5 communist leadership proved unable to make a decisive choice to give priority to a guerrilla form of struggle when faced with a revolutionary situation both in the cities and in the countryside. That this was so is, in fact, strikingly confirmed by a study of the published documents of the Communist Party of Greece during the occupation (although Eudes does not himself draw on these). It has furthermore been implicitly admitted by one of the members of the communist politburo of that period, Petros Roussos, in his book *I Megali Tetrastia* (Four Great Years), which surprisingly does not appear in Eudes' bibliography.

The second charge is the more usual one that EAM-ELAS made too many concessions to Britain during the German occupation. This charge is reinforced by the additional consideration that they made these concessions to serve the general strategic interests of the USSR to the detriment of those of the Greek revolution. The charge is at that point extended to include the Soviet government, i.e. Stalin, who not only sold the Greek communists down the river in his famous deal with Churchill (the existence of which, it should be said, official Soviet historians continue hypocritically to deny), but also sent a representative to the Greek mountains (the mysterious Colonel Popov) to keep the Greek guerrillas in line. Finally, the attitude of the Greek communist leadership towards Britain and the USSR is compared with the militant and determined attitude of Tito and the Yugoslav communists, whose intransigence is claimed to explain why they won the day.

Here some caution would not be out of place. There is no doubt that the Greek communist leadership made too many, monstrously many, concessions to Britain during the war. There is no doubt that a general motivation to serve the interests of the Soviet Union did exist on the Greek communist side. There is also no doubt that Stalin did sell the Greek communists down the river. Yet some doubt does persist, even for Eudes himself, as to whether, having given Churchill a free hand in Greece, the Soviet leadership might not have hoped that this hand would in fact be tied by the unaided force of the Greek communists.

This point merits a rather closer examination. Eudes writes (p. 147): 'No doubt Popov's mask expressed the stance of a Pontius Pilate. There is nothing we can do for you; sort it out for yourselves. It is most unlikely that the head of the Soviet Mission would personally have wished EAM-ELAS to capitulate to the Anglo-Saxon Allies.' But Popov arrived in Greece shortly after the conclusion of the fateful Lebanon agreement that incorporated the capitulation to the Allies. Moreover, he arrived at a moment when the agreement was coming under fire from the *Kapetanios*—and indeed from the vast majority of the rank-and-file of EAM and the communist party. For once it appeared as if the popular current was likely to carry along the dogmatic leadership. At that precise moment Popov arrived. The objections and the threatened withdrawal of EAM from the agreement were immediately dropped. The inference has been drawn that Popov actually instructed Siandos, the Secretary of the Communist Party, to abide by the Lebanon agreement in the name of Allied unity. Indeed, Eudes presents for the first time the transcript of an alleged conversation between one of Popov's staff and a distinguished guerrilla leader (Bakirtzis, an officer of the

regular army) to the effect that the Lebanon agreement must be respected. If that was the content of the message which Popov transmitted to Siandos, then there can be no equivocation; the USSR did actually instruct the Greek communist leadership to surrender to Britain. If not, the responsibility for what happened on the Greek side was not Stalin's alone, despite his deal with Churchill. What is the truth?

To this tantalizing question it is possible that we shall never learn the answer with certainty—unless, of course, the Soviet authorities decide to disclose it. On the Greek side, there are just three persons who may be 'in the know'. The first is Petros Roussos, the man who negotiated the Lebanon agreement. He is a devout pro-Moscow communist; he will not speak. The second is Dimitris Partsalidis, the secretary of EAM in the crucial period of Popov's arrival. Partsalidis happens to be the man who initiated the present rift in the Greek communist party. He is one of the leaders of the 'Party of the Interior', which has proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union. Partsalidis, now in a Greek prison for anti-junta activity, is probably too devoted to the sacred memory of the wartime Soviet Union to open his mouth on such a damning topic. The third is the ex-secretary-general of the communist party, Nikos Zahariadis. Although in German captivity during the war, he was certainly briefed by Siandos upon his return to Greece. It is not inconceivable that Zahariadis might decide to speak. But we shall not be able to hear him. The Soviet authorities keep him 'employed' in a kolkhoz lost somewhere in the deeper depths of the Russian countryside. The great secret of the Greek resistance, the secret that may well have cost tens of thousands of lives of EAM and communist party members, remains well guarded against those most entitled to know: the Greek Left and the Greek people in general.

Finally, we have to deal briefly with the comparison between the attitude of the Greek and that of the Yugoslav communists. It is certainly true that, under Tito, the Yugoslav communist movement faced both its internal and its external opponents with greater determination than did their Greek counterparts. But too much should not be made of this political superiority. One should never forget that British troops did not go to Yugoslavia. They went to Greece. That, in itself might be enough to explain the different fate of the two, otherwise so similar resistance movements. We ought to be careful not to attribute to superior handling of the situation an outcome due to good fortune.

The third area in which the Greek communist leadership is indicted by Eudes is for its actual handling of the armed struggle, first against the British and second against the Greek government forces. With regard to the former it is claimed that insufficient aggressiveness was displayed in December 1944, and that this was compounded by utterly incompetent tactics. The claim is correct on both counts. Between 5 and 10 December 1944, the British troops in Athens found themselves in an extremely difficult position; so difficult that mass surrender appeared even to Churchill himself to be on the cards. To force such a surrender was in the power of the ELAS forces. One may imagine the diplomatic

and domestic British political repercussions of such a defeat. Churchill's position in Greece might easily have been rendered untenable. But ELAS was not ordered to make the required effort in time. Rather it was made to divide its forces between fighting the British in Athens and pursuing Zervas in the North-West of Greece. This lack of determination and co-ordination in the clash with the British is half-implicitly, half-explicitly attributed by Eudes to the belief of the communist leadership that they were not fighting to achieve military victory but merely to negotiate from a position of strength with the British, presumably keen to see a quick end to the fighting. It was the worst possible tactic to adopt towards an opponent like Churchill, who firmly held to the principle 'no peace without victory'.

Unwilling to learn from experience, the Greek communist leadership repeated the same mistake in its clumsy handling of the armed struggle against the government forces in the 1947-9 period. With regard to this latter period, the organizer of the Democratic Army, Markos Vafiadis, in his written criticism of the party's leadership, hits the nail on the head when he writes: 'The Party did not join the people's armed struggle with much conviction, still less with the intention of carrying it through to victory. It wanted to use armed struggle as a form of blackmail to deal with the situation which had arisen after Varkiza . . .' (one more capitulatory agreement made by the Greek communist leadership after the defeat of December 1944 in Athens). (Eudes, p. 335.)

Thus the accusations levelled by Eudes against the wartime communist leadership are substantially justified. But his attempt at a theoretical explanation of their mistakes is less convincing. No plausible explanation is given of the ability of such a blundering leadership to maintain the support of its followers and neutralize the opposition from the *Kapetanios*. The undemocratic nature of Stalinist communist parties cannot be the whole reason. Nor can mistrust towards the peasant masses (a mistrust largely inferred rather than demonstrated by Eudes) explain everything. A more plausible explanation, based on the facts and often penetrating partial analyses offered by Eudes, could be sought along the following lines.

The Communist Party of Greece was formed and moulded in the inter-war period. It grew up as a Bolshevik, Leninist-type party of professional revolutionaries, committed to class struggle, to the hegemony of the proletariat, to democratic centralism and to the Third International. In the early thirties, the Party was taken over by a group of determined Stalinists, who combined missionary zeal with ruthless imposition of discipline and political uniformity on the party organizations. Up to 1934 the Communist Party of Greece followed classical Third Period policies, rejecting all alliances inside the working-class movement; but it did seek to maximize the revolutionary potential of the proletarian elite.

In 1935, however, these attitudes were given a severe jolt by the Communist International, which laid down its policy of Popular Fronts against fascism. The Greek communists, soon to face a fascist-type dictatorship in their own land, interpreted the International directives

as meaning the postponement of the class-struggle for socialism until such time as the fascist threat would no longer throw its shadow on the world. They embarked on a fairly open programme of anti-fascist alliances, which stood them in good stead as a preparation for the national liberation front of the Nazi occupation. Their conception of EAM was similar. EAM was not intended to win power for the communist party but to maximize anti-fascist unity and, at most, safeguard the conditions of free political competition among various ideological groups after the liberation.

Given that they did not view the EAM movement as a movement for the revolutionary conquest of power, the Greek communist leaders were sceptical about the merits of exploiting the full military potential of the situation in and through ELAS. Their reservations however, referred to armed struggle in general, which they considered as subsidiary to the mass political struggle so successfully waged by EAM. They did not refer to a specific form of armed action—peasant guerrilla. All armed struggle was for them of secondary importance. The main factor, which determined the hesitation of the communist leadership, as well as its weak attitude towards British pressure, was the interpretation of their role during the war as being merely to help the allies defeat Hitler, while the question of power could wait.

If EAM had been less successful, if a non-communist resistance of some strength had also developed in Greece, this attitude of equal partnership in wartime might have been justified. The trouble was that the Greek communists proved too successful in resistance. The Greek people, through EAM, offered themselves to communist leadership, not merely for resistance but also for broader political and social objectives, i.e. for a socialist transformation. The communist leadership, which had set itself the limited objective of fighting the Nazis, found revolution and power thrust upon it by an enthusiastic people in arms. This proved too much for them. They proved unable to follow the transformation of the resistance chrysalis into a revolutionary movement. Hence they stuck to their limited view, of trying to carve out for the communist party a partial position in the public life of Greece, whereas what had been given them by the Greek people and by historical events was the whole of Greek social life to be reshaped in accordance with socialist principles. Their hesitation to resort to armed struggle, their strange willingness to enter into political negotiations and unequal agreements, all stem from this fundamental conception of their role as a mere anti-fascist ally and not as a leader of a people bent upon completing its national liberation from the occupying German forces by its political liberation from a British-controlled monarchist regime and its socio-economic emancipation from capitalism.

Budes fails to bring out the importance of the Popular Front mentality in the formulation of the policies of the Greek communist party towards the resistance. Starting his narrative with the formation of ELAS, he ignores the crucial 1935-42 period, in which the ideologico-political principles which led to the emergence of the EAM conception were shaped. He is too influenced by a problematic not directly applicable to Greece, involving the counterposition of peasant guerrilla to action of

the working class in the cities. But Greece, during the German occupation, was a country that had already solved the problem of distribution of landed estates, which presumably gives the main impetus to rural revolution. The working class of Greece did not at all resemble a privileged proletariat, indulging in trade-union action in an industrialized enclave of a generally underdeveloped country. The Greek working class proved to be as revolutionary as the Greek peasantry if not more so, and if it held back from massively joining ELAS in the mountains, the reason was that it was not asked to do so by the leaders in whom it believed. These leaders were mechanically responding to the schema of an international alliance during a period of time when independent initiative and political courage (implying first and foremost the rejection of any passive acceptance of Soviet orders) were the precondition for success.

On the other hand, these same leaders had won the confidence of the Greek masses by their readiness to serve, and sacrifice themselves in the service of the political movement in which they believed. Their obvious dedication, combined with the formidable prestige of the Soviet Union in the thirties and forties, placed them in an impregnable position in the Greek revolutionary movement. The *Kapetanios* on the other hand, most of whom were of the same breed of inter-war communist leaders, did not manage to present an alternative political platform and fight, on that basis, for the leadership of the movement. Their rebellions against the official line, illustrated by the tragedy of Aris Velouhiotis and the lesser tragedy of Markos Vafiadis, came too late and were too limited. Although, compared to the official leaders, the *Kapetanios* were nearer to a correct policy, they never came near enough to make a decisive difference. If the Greek revolution failed, part of the responsibility has to fall on the shoulders of the *Kapetanios* as well.

But it is the virtue of Eudes to have chosen to make a sympathetic presentation of the views of people like Tzimas (now dead), Karagiorgis, Kikitzas or Markos Vafiadis, who never got a proper hearing in the Greek Left, although they were nearer the truth than the Stalinists who persecuted and in some cases exterminated them. It is a fact that the history of the Greek revolutionary movement has not yet been written and Eudes makes an essential contribution. Even from what has been published till now, however, two great lessons emerge from the tragic experience of the Greek revolution. The first is that revolutionary courage and discipline, necessary in hours of battle, cannot be made into a fetish that exempts the leadership of a movement from criticism, and indeed from replacement in case of failure. Secondly the real mistake of the leaders of the Greek Party was not so much that they underestimated the rural struggle or overemphasized the urban struggle but rather that they allowed the spirit of the anti-Facist Alliance, the myth and reality of British military strength and the indications emanating from the Soviet leadership, to deflect them from consummating and consolidating the revolutionary popular power that the Resistance movement had made such a potent reality.

George Cataphores

Scanner

Eskimo Politics: the Threat from the South

Hugh Brody

5

Over the past 25 years the marginal lands of extractive industry have extended to the world's remotest regions, with the accelerated spread of large-scale international corporations, the extension of us economic imperialism and the growing tendency of corporations to collaborate on specific resource development projects. Against a background of rising panic at the prospect of a world energy and mineral shortage particularly in the last five years, the hidden treasure of these most distant areas has become accessible. As new economies of scale have been made possible, the long arm of development has begun to reach out even for the shores and islands of the high Arctic. Enormous economic changes are now taking place in the far north of Alaska and Canada, in the lands of the least developed peoples of North America,¹ and it is these massive changes which provide the context for the political formation of an underdeveloped ethnic minority.

¹ The number of Eskimos in North America is about 180,000, of which 14,000 are in Canada, 25,000 in Alaska, 40,000 in Greenland with at least 1,500 in the USSR. The Eskimos are ethnically quite distinct from North American Indians, and unlike the Indians all the different Eskimo groups speak a common language.

Plundering the Inaccessible

Although the circumpolar lands have long been believed to contain vast oil and gas fields as well as rich mineral deposits, these extremely rich stores of non-renewable resources lay beyond economic reach up to 25 years ago. The Russian Arctic did attract fortune seekers in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the 19th-century quest for fur in the American far north-west turned into a rush for gold. But those early enterprises were based on individual or small group prospecting for relatively accessible and, £ for lb, exceedingly valuable resources. It *was* possible for one man or one ship's company to snatch a small fortune in sea otter skins, baleen or gold. It *was not* possible to turn iron or zinc deposits into anything more valuable than survey maps or geological specimens, even where the size and quality of deposits were well known.

The costs of exploiting non-renewable resources anywhere in the Arctic are enormous. The highest grade ores present serious transportation problems; even pure iron is heavy for its price. Shipping cannot find all-year-round access to possible mine sites or oil fields; pipelines and air-freight costs threaten to price most operations out on grounds of profitability. To be viable, high Arctic resource exploitation depends on economies of scale: it is possible only if reserves are truly massive, their life expectancy very long, mineral quality very high, and the relevant world markets have the look of long-term stability or expansion. Even where these conditions are met (as they would appear to be in the case *inter alia* of oil, natural gas, zinc, lead, and quality iron ore) other limitations arise. In the far north capital depreciation rates and labour costs are both relatively high. The need for scale means that initial investment in machinery is extremely large, while initial research costs (a function of uncertainty with high outlay) and pressure from environmentalists tend to place capital at risk.

The Northern Aborigines

The costs are partly a function of remoteness. Another function of remoteness is the cultural and economic separation of the far northern peoples from their colonizers to the south. The Eskimos and Indians of the central Canadian Arctic have the shortest history of acculturation of any peoples in North America, Russia, or Greenland. But even in Siberia, where contact is long-standing, remoteness has rendered economic, social, and ideological transformation slow and uncertain. The Eskimos of North Alaska are all too familiar with southern traders and infectious diseases, but until only very recently many lived on a blend of semi-nomadic subsistence and fur-trading. In central Canada some Eskimos and a very few Indians still do.

Development of Alaska and the Canadian Arctic thus represents a convergence of the most elaborate technological enterprises and the least developed groups of people anywhere on the North American continent. Industrial enterprises investing billions of dollars and, in the secondary stages of development, employing thousands of highly paid workers, begin to appear alongside communities where material standards of life are extremely low, where groups have succeeded in

balancing an exploitative fur trade with hunting and welfare to avoid actual privation. Communities where average cash income per family is in the nature of \$200 per annum are conscious of; or even marginally participants in, wage-labour at minimum rates of \$8,000 per annum.² In its ideological aspect the contrast is no less dramatic. The vast industrial enterprise involves accepting present loss for future gain, a habit which brings migrant workers to live in isolation and social impoverishment because they will thereby establish a resource for when they return south; this also means corporations spend millions of dollars now because they will profit many fold in 20 years time. It is scarcely necessary to say that such a habit of mind has no sure place in the ideological formations of northern aboriginal groups. Nor do they share in that necessary condition for capitalist industrialization which lies in a readiness to place desire for personal advancement above commitment to family and home. To them the ways of big business are at best bizarre or mysterious and at worst sheer folly. If the southern developers are not judged harshly, it is because they exist in a moral and cultural climate so remote and so distant as to lie beyond the realm where local moral conceptions are felt to be applicable.

The Eskimo social context which casts extractive industry into such stark contrast has three main features. First and most importantly, the economic base is compounded of quasi-traditional activities and a most modern impoverishment. Quasi-traditional activities include hunting and trapping for food and furs (a proletarian class position *vis-à-vis* traders) alongside welfare dependency and casual or occasional labouring in conditions of structural under-employment (a lumpen-proletarian class position *vis-à-vis* national economic development extended into the far north).

Second, economic base and lumpenproletarian class position are reinforced by under-qualification: Indians and Eskimos have schooling; but only in very rare cases do they achieve grade levels which allow access even to semi-skilled jobs in an urbanizing or urbanized milieu. Further, most Indians and Eskimos in the North-west Territories of Canada speak English as a second language if at all. A majority of Eskimos in the Eastern Arctic speak virtually no English. Opportunities for participation in the economy outside the village is therefore extremely limited, while employment within the village tends to be restricted to more menial jobs.

Finally, under-development is evidenced by a distinctive political formation. In the least-developed areas, political preoccupation tends to be with the growth of permanent settlements and the social difficulties these create. Hence issues tend to be local, even inter-familial rather than political in the broad sense. In slightly more developed villages, however, political concern broadens to include the whole issue of local government and the part which has, is, and should be played by white southerners in Eskimo village life. Since the part of the southern administrator in village life cannot in reality be split from the

² There is even the irony in northern Canada of Eskimos occasionally holding job which include an isolation allowance.

whole question of political life in the Northwest Territories, the issues of local government and role of local whites is a basis for radically expanded political consciousness. Moreover, since these issues are common as between either Indian or Eskimo settlements, and the institutional formation of the whole is evidenced by problems which arise in any one of many villages, there has emerged a pan-Eskimo or pan-Indian movement. Political awareness begins to turn on a growing sense of unity *against* the whites.

The Eskimos consider that in terms of their conception of cultural and political integrity they are paying a high price for medical, educational and welfare services. They are now questioning the efficacy and desirability of these services themselves. Eskimo political formation may appear paltry in comparison to the political formation of under-developed peoples in Latin America and of oppressed ethnic groups within the United States. It must not be forgotten that in the North American Arctic there has, until very recently, been very little expropriation of land, while economic exploitation has on the whole been confined to the dealings of fur traders. And these fur traders only reached the central high Arctic in the 1920s.³ Regional or even tribal differences therefore loomed larger than any aggregate of new interests imposed by colonialism. For a long time after their discovery, neither the lands nor the peoples of the far north seemed to offer resources by whose exploitation any nation as a whole stood to profit much. Alaska, after all, was sold by Russia to the United States for 2 cents per acre;⁴ both America and Canada had ignored the business of laying clear claims to the Arctic Islands before the 1930s.

All this has been transformed by the newest rush of industry into the remotest lands. 'Who owns what' has inevitably become a central issue for everyone in the farthest north. Prospecting has been followed by claim staking and lease purchase. It has truly been a rush, and in its way the precise modern equivalent of the gold rushes of the last century. Now, however, it is not a question of some individuals perched uncertainly at the edge of America's burgeoning capitalism who risk everything in a private struggle over impossible terrain; it is the large corporations who in concert risk as little as possible for prizes undreamed of even during the gold rush.⁵

Although conceptions of land ownership were unknown to pre-contact peoples of the far north, just as was the case among the Plains Indians, the exploitation rush has led Indians and Eskimos to make their own calculations. Where people once asked for services they are now laying claims to their territories and resources. The southerners have shown the real northerners what it is to own land and the

³ European explorers were first 'discovered' by two groups of Eskimos in 1914 and 1915.

⁴ When Seward was negotiating for the purchase of Alaska, he was much criticized for wanting to spend Federal dollars on valueless 'icebergs'.

⁵ Until 1964 gold and silver continued to dominate mining in the Canadian north, although extremely rich oil strikes were made after drillings in 1920.

resources that lie in it, as they have shown what connections there are between owning specific resources and acquiring riches in general. Furthermore, knowledge about similar or analogous situations in other places has shown that stating a claim can eventually come very close to transforming a material situation. Confrontation between us Indian groups and the American Bureau of Indian Affairs over treaty rights has in some measure pointed the way. By such processes, even the most isolated communities can quite rapidly change from being grateful for unexpected services into insisting upon rights and properties.

The Alaska Land Settlement

At present it is hardly surprising that entrepreneurial ambitions have tended to be at the front of angry demands for a better deal from government, in both directly economic terms and even over civil rights. However the Alaska land settlement of 1971 does illustrate how the new resource vision of the north could bring about a temporary deal between seemingly militant organizations and the United States government. The principal elements in the settlement locate clearly enough the routes which all can follow. Precisely because the scale of economic development has to be vast, government *can* be willing to make an apparently generous peace with the articulated demands of its northern communities.

The Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act was passed into law in December 1971. The Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts⁶ had begun in 1955 to push for a final settlement, though the problematic nature of land ownership had been evident at the time of the Alaska purchase in 1867; indeed, some ownership ambiguity had been implicit in the terms of sale. The 1971 Act resolved ambiguities through three main provisions: Natives defined under the Act are jointly granted all legal title to 40 million acres of Alaskan land; a grant is made to Native-owned regional and village corporations to the value of approximately one billion dollars; the Native corporations receive a share of revenue out of all state and federal mineral leases. These corporations are of two kinds, regional and village. The act stipulates that all 12 regional corporations *must* be organized on a business-for-profit basis, while the village corporations (expected to number about 220) can be organized on any lines their members may decide. According to the act, a Native is defined as such in virtue of having at least one grandparent who was held to be Native before the Act, but there is no Alaskan residence requirement; this will increase the total Alaskan Native population from 53,000 to around 100,000.

There are other important clauses to the Act. Revenue sharing is *not* retroactive; therefore the State of Alaska will not be obliged to pay any percentage on the \$900 million it has got from the sale of North Slope oil and gas leases. The us federal government retains several million acres of land as 'public easement', that is as a transportation or pipeline corridor across Alaska. Also, the Act automatically extinguishes

⁶ The Aleuts are the people who live in the Aleutian Island chain off western Alaska. They are culturally and linguistically close to the Eskimos.

all claims to hunting grounds based on aboriginal land use, although the special education and health programmes designed to help Alaskan Natives will continue.⁷ The new land-ownership is itself restricted for 20 years, since for that time Natives will not be entitled to sell their lands to non-Natives.

Despite these limitations to the scope of the Act, it has been presented as a triumph for Alaskan Natives, as a tribute to the goodwill an enlightened American public is willing to show towards the first Alaskans, and as a personal moral boost for Nixon. The Act itself, however, hardly compromises business interests in Alaska. Indeed, one Congressman commented during the Congressional debate over the terms: 'But settlement of these claims did not achieve such a high priority status until there was confirmation of large oil reserves on the Alaskan North Slope. The resultant lobbying by oil interests and other considerations has generated pressure legislation practically mandating its passage and enactment.' This pressure was scarcely surprising, since in 1969 Alaskan land was largely closed to developers pending settlement of claims. According to Alaskan state officials this brought economic development in the state to a standstill. The development lobby became appropriately enthusiastic about a settlement—even an expensive one.

The US Federal government in its turn was likely to be responsive to the lobby for two reasons. In the first place, large subsidies would have to flow from Federal funds into development, however land ownership and mineral rights resolved themselves. Under a settlement this money is passed to Native corporations to spend on a similar or perhaps even broader development base. Whoever does the developing has to carry out expensive research and groundwork programmes, some part of the cost of which has to be borne by Federal funds. Such a subsidy is another function of the scale which allows long-term profitability to extractive industry in the north. A rational government would not be disturbed by the colour or shape of the hands which pass the cash between treasury and the development programmes as long as it can be assured that development is where it will end. In the second place, Native organizations which sponsored and fought claims could only become more militant. Moreover, protracted further delays could well have weakened the entrepreneurial factions in the organizations and given strength to more directly political or even openly anti-industrial demands. In political terms, therefore, quick settlement was most likely to be cheapest. Once the developers were anxious to be under way and the necessary economies of scale could be attained, the situation could not be delayed.⁸ These conditions created

⁷ But they will, by the Act, come up for special review after three years. These programmes annually cost a little over \$25 million.

⁸ During the Congressional debate (20-10-70) a Louisiana representative voiced a parallel economic apprehension: 'So far as I am concerned, the 40 million acre figure is arbitrary and the \$925 million compensation figure is arbitrary. But at least it is something the committee has agreed on and now the Congress can agree on. There is no need for us to delay any longer. It is time to settle these claims. If one does not think that it is, then we can wait until the year 2071 comes along . . . and we will find the award tripled, and perhaps even more expensive than that.'

the readiness of the Nixon administration, which perceived that a settlement could—in its appearance of generosity and by its precise terms—go far to meet the immediate economic needs expressed by the international business lobby, brighten the moral image of the administration on the increasingly notorious Indian question, and at the same time actually satisfy the main objectives of the strongest voice among the Native organizations' leadership. Pressure was strong and from the government point of view the moment was right.

A Model for Canada ?

For both the Canadian government and Canadian Eskimo or Indian associations the Alaska settlement offered a model of what had to be done, and the scale of what could be expected. Extractive industries have been building up their activities in the Canadian far north since 1964. Between 1964 and 1969 there have, according to official reports, been five 'stake rushes'. In 1968 10,000 mineral claims were recorded for the area north of latitude 60. These claims have centred on base metal deposits; oil and gas exploitation began in the 1950s, but was restricted to the southern and western edges of the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Although some 250 wells were drilled between 1960 and 1970, prior to 1967 capital available for oil and gas development tended towards the North Sea. In 1968, however, the Panarctic combine—including the Canadian federal government with a 45 per cent interest—was formed specifically to establish the scale of oil and gas reserves in the high Arctic islands.

The formation of Panarctic marked a crucial new turn in Canadian mining. It marked the shift northwards, and was in that respect part of a tendency that was also to be noticed in both gold and base metal exploitation.⁹ This shift to the north was a move into the Eskimo heartland: the Arctic coast and islands have always been the principal territories of Canada's 14,000 Eskimos. Their traditional hunting grounds include at least parts of virtually all the high Arctic islands. Furthermore, transportation routes—either by tanker ~~and~~ icebreaker or by pipeline—are bound to pass through the lands of communities which lie perhaps many hundreds of miles from the actual mineral sources. Indeed, pipeline routes could well be sited along a settlement to settlement linkage plan. And even where a mine were not to be developed, the widespread nature of exploration means that few Eskimo communities can expect to remain untouched by the mining industry's stampede.

The scale of the Canadian high Arctic oil, gas, and mineral resources can be judged by the initial costs and transportation overheads that are

⁹ 1970-71 showed a decline in value of total Northwest Territories mineral production; the huge lead and zinc operation at Pine Point was down by 40 per cent (lead) and 20 per cent (zinc) compared with 1970 production. It was also estimated in 1970 that by 1973-74 gold reserves worked around Yellowknife would expire (1970 production value of two mines = \$21.2 million). In 1972 the mining industry planned to spend \$10 million on exploration and new development in the Canadian far north.

being contemplated. In granting exploration permits, the government insists on a minimum expenditure by prospective developers. For 1970-75 that minimum expenditure was expected to equal \$500 million. The cost of beginning an operation was shown by Cominco's willingness to spend two million dollars simply to evaluate a body of ore on Cornwallis Island. Similarly the cost of pipelines is huge but is apparently no longer regarded as prohibitive; the Mackenzie Valley gas line construction was estimated at \$6 billion, but reserves in the Mackenzie Delta alone are said to justify that expenditure.¹⁰ In 1970 it was thought that one such gas and oil line would complete possible development; it is now being thought that at least two lines could be justifiable. By September 1972 \$20 million had been spent on studying the feasibility of an arctic pipeline. Most recently, the gas discoveries on Ellesmere Island and other eastern Arctic island sites are possibly going to 'justify' construction of a pipeline which will pass from the high eastern Canadian arctic to at least as far as the United States-Canada border.

In response to these development potentials, Eskimo and Indian Associations in Canada are formulating their land claims. But the Indian organizations have already entered political arenas which go far beyond the issues of land and mineral rights. The Native Brotherhood of Canada claims to represent and speak for the Indian people of the Northwest Territories, and in effect constitutes a rival authority to the Territorial Council.¹¹ This is bitterly resented by the Council, which has urged the federal government to ensure that organizations like the Brotherhood limited their activities to the land claims issue. In 1972 an organization called *Inuit Tapirissat* emerged as the organization which was to research and formulate Eskimo land claims (and is subsidized out of federal funds for just that purpose). But *Tapirissat* quickly came to be regarded by many Eskimo people as their voice in many matters, and an organization which would represent their disaffection for the overall evolution of administration in the settlements. Thus *Inuit Tapirissat* have become involved with education and local government issues alongside their official brief for land claims.

Political consciousness of these organizations will mirror the inevitable shift in their status, a shift from being bargaining agents to being at least implicitly the peoples' representatives. Land claim issues thus give rise to new institutions which come to be founded on the community of interests shared by Eskimos and Indians alike, and which provide expression to the uncertain and often confused sense of opposition to directions in economic and cultural affairs taken by

¹⁰ It is significant that the cost of gas to the consumer is expected to be between 75 cents and \$1 per 1,000 cubic feet. The current price is *circa* 35 cents per 1,000 cubic feet. At the same time profitability is not expected to be reached by oil and gas companies until at least 10 years after beginning production.

¹¹ The Territorial Council is an elected body, but has very few non-white members, largely because democratic procedure is not seen by non-whites as having much to do with their predicament. Indians comprise 19 per cent of the Territories' population; 33 per cent are Eskimos.

federal and territorial governments. This form of political self-definition, and the processes by which it emerges, are common to many minority groups which have existed in the remote hinterlands of rapidly developing industrial societies. But most have acquiesced more readily and slid more certainly into apathy at the base of the wage-labour pyramids than the Eskimos and Indians of the far north. In the more developed American Indian communities a local bourgeoisie has emerged. Based on higher education and free enterprise facilities (functions of time and supportive government policies) the Indian bourgeoisie has more or less automatically taken over the leadership of Indian organizations. This leadership expresses its class interests in the order of its demands, and the liberal or progressive elements in their programmes—stemming from a racial predicament—tend to be confined to civil rights issues and somewhat tokenist culturalism in education. The liberal features are situated on the face of that classical liberalism of the entrepreneurial interest.

The northern organizations, by virtue of the level of their socio-economic under-development, cannot have the same preoccupations. The class position of the northern Eskimo and Indian is much the same as that of the leaders of their new organizations. Only the financial and social status deriving from being a leader distinguishes most leadership from membership interests. Given also the process whereby the Canadian northern organizations are finding themselves in profound opposition to the 'economic development' lobby, the organizations' leaders concentrate on securing the material and social conditions (and political autonomy) for ensuring the life style at present desired by the substantial majority of northern Eskimo and Indians. Hence, for example, the James Bay Project in Arctic Quebec is opposed by an alliance of Eskimos and Indians on the grounds that it will destroy hunting grounds and the resource base for Cree trappers; *not* on the grounds that they—the Cree and other Indian groups—will not receive a proper share in the long-term value of a new resource. Thus the political orientation of those organizations whose membership and leadership have essentially similar class interests tends to verge towards anti-development or anti-industrialist positions. Moreover, their political concern with the local and traditional economic base is paralleled by concern with local government and educational structures: the broad objective is separate development. This objective is given some plausibility by the supportive nature of the welfare institutions which presently surround the Canadian Eskimos, and these institutions are in turn made possible by the resource potential of the country.

The Canadian Eskimos are in a curious predicament. They are confronted by all the power and influence wielded by large scale capital in a hurry. They are themselves equipped with the most meagre resources with which to oppose that influence. They are just beginning to assess the value of the resources concealed in their land, resources which have got industry rushing in; but by the same token the Eskimos are only just now assessing the tactics available to them for combatting outside exploiters. With remarkable speed and with deep anxiety, the Eskimos of even the remotest regions have sensed the cliff towards which they are being pushed.

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Politics and Culture in Bengal

Bengal was the microcosm of British rule in India, the original seat of Imperial power, the base from which the East India Company set out on its career of aggrandisement, ending in the complete subjugation of the subcontinent from the Khyber to Cape Comorin. Private loot, the organized spoliation of commerce, industry and agriculture, far-reaching administrative innovations, educational reforms, the acceptance of new and liberating ideas from the West by a rising and articulate bourgeoisie, the intensification of certain archaic social relations by the colonial power—these were all part of the complex and contradictory fabric of colonized Bengal. It was against this background that initial indications emerged of an Indian national consciousness and of the rival forms such consciousness could assume. Through the prism of Bengal's historical experience were to be refracted significant themes of the later development of India as a whole.

The Delta and Bengal Society

The environment of Bengal is formed by the confluence of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra which drain the upper Gangetic basin and Tibetan Plateau. The vortex of these rivers has created one of the world's largest, most fertile and dynamic deltaic expanses. And much of the specificity of Bengal's social and historical experience in South Asia derives from the social formation arising in this unique delta. The aboriginal migrants who progressively settled the delta—and whose descendants constitute the mass of Bengal's population today—developed techniques of deep water cultivation and fishing intimately suited to the fertile but inundated and shifting alluvium of the delta. A relatively low division of labour and exceedingly unstable communications produced a decentralized and undifferentiated society.¹ As a result it proved particularly difficult to raise or impose the types of socio-religious order characteristic of the more centralized and stratified Aryan civilizations emerging in the upper Gangetic plain to the Northwest. Moreover, situated in the extreme Eastern portion of the South Asian subcontinent, Bengal always remained peripheral to the processes of imperial consolidation of the earlier Hindu and Moghul periods. There tended to be a sharp division between the indigenous population of Bengal and those alien elites who conquered and reared a state apparatus above them. Moreover the Bengalis were often able to exploit the favours of geography—the inaccessibility and fertility of their land—to adapt to their conquerors on their own terms.

Brahminism spread to Bengal during the consolidation of the Gupta Empire in the 5th century while Islam followed in the wake of the Turko-Afghan conquest in the 13th century.² Both these invasions and their associated religions had similar effects on the indigenous population in Bengal. Both Hindu and Muslim conquerors promoted local conversion during their respective periods of rule. But the popular forms of Brahminism and Islam differed radically from the orthodoxy of these rulers.³ The conquering castes of Brahman Baidya and Kayastha branded the local population ritually inferior and low caste, while the latter responded with mass support for every major anti-Brahminical movement throughout Bengali history—Buddhism, Vaishnavism and Islam. And when approximately half of Bengal's low caste local population converted to Islam after it became associated with state power, the converts found themselves little better off in the professedly egalitarian eyes of the Turko-Afghan elites of Islam. These claimed themselves to be *Ascharif*—Noble Born, descended from the line of the Prophet—while condescending to label their Bengali

¹ Ralph W. Nicholas, 'Ecology and Village Structure in Deltaic West Bengal', *Economic and Political Weekly* 15: 1185-1196; also 'Villages of the Bengal Delta: a study of ecology and peasant society,' Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation University of Chicago, 1962. For many helpful suggestions in the preparation of this article we would like to thank Richard Nations, Rokeya Rahman Kabir, P. N. Chaudhuri and Robin Blackburn.

² Ramkrishna Mukherjee, 'Social Background of Bangladesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. VII, Annual Number, February 1972, pp. 265-74.

³ A. Karim, *Social history of Muslims in Bengal (down to 1538)*, Pakistan 1959.

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brethren *Ajlaf*—ignoble—an Islamic equivalent of “low caste”.⁴ Moreover, the Islamic conquest incorporated the upper class of learned and landed Hindu castes as the privileged functionaries necessary to mediate Islamic rule with the local population.⁵ And just as wealthy Hindus served the Moghuls in administration, so they did in commerce as well. For the state formed an alliance with the House of Jagath Seth, North Indian *banyans* (a Hindu commercial caste), in order to develop luxury craft industries and commerce.⁶ Historically Bengal specialized in the production of muslin and other high quality cloths.

The majority of the population of East Bengal were converted to the Muslim religion while the population of the smaller Western part remained Hindu. No adequate explanation of this differing pattern of conversion has been advanced, though it is clear that rejection of the Hindu religion by the low caste Bengalis was a form of revolt against the oppression and stigma to which they were subject. For a variety of reasons it seems that the traditional mechanisms of social control were more resilient in the Western part of Bengal and even the appearance of a Muslim ruling power was insufficient to break the hold of the Hindu religion. Historically West Bengal occupies the moribund region of the delta which is not subject to the massive annual floods which inundate the Eastern region. In the West there have long been more stable communications as a consequence and more sophisticated forms of cultivation and social differentiation. Better communications meant that West Bengal could be more securely integrated into the Hindu culture of the upper Gangetic basin. A more elaborate social division of labour multiplied the different categories of social and economic organization allowing caste organization to establish a firmer grip in the West than in the East. However it should be remembered that a sizeable majority of the population of Bengal as a whole did become Muslim. It was the prodigious growth of Calcutta which was later somewhat to increase the social weight of the Western part and hence of those Bengalis who remained Hindu.

Thus on the eve of the British conquest Bengali society displayed a complexity of social division reflecting caste, communal and status differences. But underlying all these was the basic class division between the bulk of the cultivating and artisan population in the villages,⁷

⁴ Ahmad Imtiaz, ‘The ashraf-ajlaf categories in Indo-muslim society,’ *Economic and Political Weekly*, II, 1967, pp. 887–90.

⁵ Philip B. Calkins, ‘The formation of a regionally oriented ruling group in Bengal, 1700–1740,’ *Journal of Asian Studies* XXIX: pp. 807–21.

⁶ In the concluding years of the 17th century Bengal presented a remarkable picture of prosperity. The Venetian, Manouchi, who became Chief Physician to the Moghul Emperor, Aurangzeb, has left us the following description: ‘Bengal is of all kingdoms of the Mogul best known in France. The prodigious riches transported thence into Europe are proofs of its great fertility. We may venture to say that it is not inferior in anything to Egypt, and it even exceeds that kingdom in its products of silks, cottons, sugar and indigo. All things are in plenty here, fruits, pulse, grain, muslins, cloths of gold and silk.’

⁷ Most observers and historians of rural Bengal have commented on the common matrix of social and cultural forms which integrates Muslims and Hindus at the village level (cf., Uma Guha, ‘Caste among rural Bengali muslims’, *Man in India* Vol. 45: pp. 167–69; Robert Glasse, ‘La société musulmane dans le Pakistan rural de

and the elites who lived off their surplus in the forms of state taxes, feudal exactions and commercial profits. These elites formed a class alliance of the dominant higher caste Hindus and the Muslim aristocrats who controlled the administrative and military state machine, in conjunction with North Indian banyans who controlled commercial capital. The British disturbed this order, introducing a new structure of collaboration,⁸ geared to the evolution of capitalism in Europe. As we have seen the Bengali elite had been able to accommodate to previous invaders on their own terms. But this new conquest brought in its train all the fateful and potent forces of ascendant capitalism and imperialism. The future was to show that the traditional mechanisms of accommodation and absorption were no match for these implacable forces. In a bid to adjust to the colonial system the order of dominance among the elites was to invert, while the mass of Bengal's cultivating population was to experience a severe intensification of social oppression.

The East India Company

Attracted by the commercial profits to be gained from trade in the luxury commodities produced in Bengal, the East India Company quickly stepped in to exploit the political and social contradictions in this rich Moghul province and bring it under control. Colluding with a section of the landed Hindus as well as with the Seths, whose profit margins were hampered by Moghul impositions on commerce, the East India Company arranged their victory at Plassey in a manner which, in the words of K. M. Panikkar, was 'a transaction not a battle, a transaction by which the compradors of Bengal led by Jagath Seth sold the Nawab to the East India Company'.

Once in control the Company rapidly opened Bengal to speculators and profiteers from Europe, and through vicious commercial exploitation directed the wealth of the province into the private fortunes and capital accumulation of the British.⁹ In 1770, within two decades of British conquest, famine carried off 10 million people, or one third of the population of the province. This holocaust made it apparent ever

l'est,' *Études Rurales* MCMLXVI, Nos. 22-23-24: 188-205) while popular forms of both Islam and Hinduism reflect a common pan-Bengali background (cf. A. R. Mallick, *British policy and the Muslims of Bengal, 1757-1856*, Asiatic Society of Pakistan 1961; and Ralph W. Nicholas, 'Islam and Vaishnavism in Rural Bengal' in David Kopf, ed. *Bengal Regional Identity*, Michigan State University Asian Studies Centre Occasional Paper, 1969, pp. 33-47).

⁸ The use of the word collaboration denotes a structural rather than a pejorative concept here. For a discussion of the relation between different structures of collaboration and imperial history, cf. Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration', in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, London 1972.

⁹ Specific were the grievances voiced by some of the country's notables in a petition sent to the Calcutta Council: 'The factories of the English gentlemen are many and many of their gomastas are in all places and in every village, almost throughout the province of Bengal. They trade . . . in all kinds of grain, linen, and whatever other commodities are provided in the country. In order to purchase these articles they force their money on the ryots and having by these oppressive methods bought the goods at low rate, they oblige their inhabitants and shopkeepers to take them at a high price, exceeding what is paid in the markets' . . . quoted in R. C. Majumdar, et al., *An Advanced History of India*, London 1965, p. 675.

to the free-booters of the East India Company that only a productive society is worth dominating. Attention was turned to stabilizing the internal order of Bengal, and thus the British shifted from commercial plunder to more orderly and permanent forms of exploitation and government.¹⁰

The Permanent Settlement

The opening decades of the 19th century placed Bengal on the threshold of momentous social and economic changes which were to wrench it into the 'modern' world of global imperialism and dependent capitalist development. At the heart of the new social and economic order introduced by the British was the Permanent Settlement. Drawn from the enlightenment theories of the French Physiocrats and the later English Utilitarians, the Colonial administration introduced private property relations in Bengal in conjunction with fixing *in perpetuity* the revenue demanded by the state. Guaranteed rights to the agricultural surplus and protected from the fluctuations of state tax, the landlord would presumably reorganize production along more profitable capitalist lines. The state however blundered in the implementation of the scheme. Since they were settling permanently with the Bengali landlords, the British established a taxation schedule which was much higher and more efficiently collected than the levies it replaced.¹¹ The excessively high revenue demands of the state were backed up by market auctions for arrears in payment. This drove the old Moghul estate owners to parcel, sell, and subinfeudate their patrimony. A revolution in land holdings followed which reversed the relations between the landed elites of the old Moghul system. For well insured in the service of an alien power it was the three upper Hindu castes who first rushed into the service of the European commercial houses and attracted the profits available to those who purveyed the credit and knowledge necessary for foreign traders to do business. These *banyans*—by the time of Plassey composed almost exclusively of Brahmans, Baidiyas, and Kayasthas¹²—gained the cash incomes and

¹⁰ "The link between the two forms of exploitation, the violent form by way of direct seizure and the "peaceful" form by way of exchange on an unequal footing, is particularly clear in the case of India. In the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the East India Company had acquired exemption from all transit tolls or export dues for its own international trade. But its employees soon began to apply this exemption, illegally, to internal trade, within these provinces where the Indian merchants were subjected to heavy taxation. "The company's agents, whose goods were transported quite free of duty, whereas other merchants' goods were heavily burdened, quickly concentrated in their hands the whole of the country's trade, thereby drying up one of the sources of the public revenue" [a contemporary observation]. Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, London 1968, p. 446. Also see, Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, London 1973, pp. 277-85.

¹¹ In imposing the Permanent Settlement on the people of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the British government's aim was clearly stated by William Bentick, the Governor-General in 1828. 'If security was wanting against popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects and in most essentials, has thus great advantage at least of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people'. *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy 1750 to 1921*, edited by A. B. Keith, Vol. 1, p. 215.

¹² Before 1757, the majority of *banyans* belonged to the Vaisya caste whose traditional occupation within the Hindu system had been business and commerce. The dramatic increase in the private trade of the Company's servants, in the period after

legal knowledge necessary to capture the frantic land market when the Moghul aristocracy were brought to book for arrears in revenue. Immediately after the Permanent Settlement the big estates were broken up and passed from Muslim to almost exclusively Hindu elites, who were already entrenched in the administrative service of the British and now consolidated their hold on the land as well.

Not only did the Permanent Settlement invert the hierarchy of the propertied classes of Bengali society, it also radically transformed the relations between the cultivating peasantry and those classes living off their surplus. Bengal agriculture traditionally and to this day has been organized by peasant families occupying small holdings which they cultivate with low technology and their own labour, supplemented marginally by the labour of the community and hired help. Under the Moghul system these families held the right to permanent occupation of their holdings against the obligation to cultivate the land and pay state tax, which although roughly equivalent to the peasant's surplus, remained reasonably fixed over the generations. The Permanent Settlement, by concentrating proprietary rights in the hands of the former state revenue collector (the *zamindar*), wiped out at a stroke the peasant's hold on his land at the same time as transforming payments from a constant form of tax to *rent* which could be legally set at any level pleasing the landlord. Against the peasant's appeal to custom and tradition the British land laws placed the courts at the disposal of the *zamindar* to evict and distrain the property of the resistant peasant. Thus were knocked away the traditional barriers to the predatory exactions of the non-cultivating classes, and far from stimulating capitalist investment, British concepts of private property opened the way for urban-based rentiers to drain the capital from the countryside, disinvest agriculture, and impoverish the peasantry. By transforming the relations of tenure, the Permanent Settlement entirely blocked a similar transformation of the relations of production, instead it introduced rack-rents which intensified precapitalist exploitation.

The New Class Balance

The Permanent Settlement created a new alignment of class forces on the land. While the Moghul aristocracy dwindled into a noble penury, the traditionally landed Hindu elite extended their hold across the entire rural structure of Bengal through urban and comprador connections. Relations between the bulk of Bengal's peasant mass and their non-labouring landlords were stratified along class lines defined by unrestricted rent and increasingly subject to the forces of the global capitalist market. The British also contrived the destruction of a large part of Bengal's traditional textile industry by encouraging British firms to take over the Indian market while prohibiting the export of Indian textiles to Britain. Those who survived, prospered.

Plassey, saw a corresponding rise in the number of *banyans*, whose ranks were now swelled by high caste Bengali Hindus migrating to Calcutta in fairly large numbers. Considerable fortunes were amassed. For example Hidanam Banerjee and Montur Mukherjee became millionaires, while Ramdulah Dey with his profitable commercial and shipping interests frequently lent money even to American traders.

and seized the advantages of Bengal's new land system formed the nucleus of a new social elite and collaborationist class—the *bhadralok*.¹³

The Bhadraklok in Calcutta

The *bhadralok* were drawn from the dominant Hindu castes who had served in the military and administrative offices of the Moghuls. Collaboration with foreign rule, secured mainly through their mastery of alien languages, formed part of their social and cultural heritage. Thus if one foot of the *bhadralok* was deeply implanted in the Permanent Settlement land system, the other stepped into the offices, judiciary, schools and professions opened up by the new colonial administration in Calcutta—the commercial and political centre of British rule in South Asia. Mastery of English and a fastidious concern over education became their hallmark. Thus garnished with the culture of their new rulers, the *bhadralok* performed the bureaucratic and professional functions necessary to mediate British rule to the native population.¹⁴

As in the past, the upper caste *bhadralok* remained aloof from the

¹³ The *bhadralok* (literally 'respectable people' or 'gentlemen') was distinguishable by both class and caste, and became in the course of the next two centuries, an elite unique to Bengal. 'The great majority of these classes belong to the three great Hindu literacy castes, the Brahman, the Vaidyas (doctors), and the Kayasthas (writers), who are relatively more numerous in Bengal than are the corresponding castes in any other part of India. For untold centuries they have been the administrators, the priests, the teachers, the lawyers, the doctors, the writers, the clerks of the community. Every successive Government in Bengal has drawn its core of minor officials from among them, the British equally with their Muslim predecessors. They have therefore always formed an educated class, and it may safely be said that there is no class of corresponding magnitude and importance in any other country which has so continuous a tradition of literacy, extending over so many centuries. It has always been the first duty of every father in these castes, however poor he might be to see that his sons obtain the kind of education dictated by the tradition of their caste.' *Calcutta University Commission*, 1917-19, Report Cd Papers 386 Vol. XIV, 1919, Chapter II. p. 28. Contemporary sociologists and historians stress the Weberian status group aspect of *bhadralok* culture. They are 'distinguished many aspects of their behaviour—their deportment, their speech, their dress, their style of housing, their occupations and their associations—and quite as fundamentally by their cultural values and their sense of propriety.' J. H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal*. Berkeley 1968, pp. 5-6. It was possible to join *bhadralok* ranks through education as well as birth, but control of education networks was rigidly class based. There was considerable social differentiation within the ranks of the *bhadralok*: the *abhyas* *bhadralok* consisted of large property owners and senior Government officers and the *grihastha* *bhadralok* consisting of shopkeepers, small *zamindars* and white collar workers.

¹⁴ The extent to which the high castes dominated official and administrative appointments is spelled out in the 1901 *Census of India*, Volume VI, pp. 486 and 506:

	Appointments in Covenanted and Statutory civil Services	High Government appointments		% of total population
		Number	% of total	
Brahman				
Baidya	22	1104	80.2	5.2
Kayastha				
Lower caste				
Hindus	0	131	9.5	41.8
Muslims	3	141	10.3	51.2

Sources: J. H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth-Century Bengal*, Berkeley 1968, cf. pp. 5-12

demeaning occupations of commerce. Hence the enormous wealth that was being accumulated by Bengal's integration in the world market fell into the hands of non-Bengali trading castes—principally Marwaris, Gujaratis, and Armenians. But if the *bhadralok* did not tap the wealth gained in commerce, neither did they descend into the dishonour of physical labour: and the metropolitan demand for menials, porters, domestic servants and the like was answered by the non-Bengalis from the famine districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Thus the *bhadralok* occupied in their own metropolis the position of a middle-class in the sense that the hands of non-Bengali classes were—in their eyes—soiled by trades or labour.¹⁵ And while the former grew richer and the latter toiled in poverty, the *bhadralok* secured fees in the middle ground of bureaucracy and education. This ethnic class stratification emerged in the pre-industrial period. But later in the 20th century, when industrial capital and a proletariat were to accumulate in a concentrated belt of jute and cotton mills around Calcutta, the ethnic composition of the new classes were to remain the same. The *bhadralok* neither formed part of the new industrial bourgeoisie—composed mainly of Marwaris, Gujaratis and Sindhis—nor participated in the labour which generated their capital. Throughout the enormous social transformations which industry stimulated in Bengal the *bhadralok* were sustained by state employment and incomes from the land. Their 'middle class' position was to limit their social vision and so impede their political development. For the colonial land market and the bureaucracy of the raj secured the *bhadralok* all the advantages of the new order and placed them at the centre of the economic, social and political contradictions of British Indian Bengal. The *bhadralok* were first, the rent receivers in a predominantly agrarian economy of insecure tenants, sharecroppers and casual labourers. Second, this Hindu elite had become landlords in a predominantly Moslem population. Third, the *bhadralok* were literate, English-speaking and prosperous in a society overwhelmingly illiterate, parochial and poor. Through their education, their professions and their cosmopolitan experience the *bhadralok* displayed to the mass of society the culture of their colonial overlords. Calcutta was capital of British

¹⁵ According to the 1881 Census the population of Calcutta was 790,286 of which less than two thirds were Hindu and less than two thirds spoke Bengali as their mother tongue, while only 26.5 per cent of the inhabitants were born in the city, as many as 47.6 per cent came from Bihar, Orissa and Bhota Nagpur (all non-Bengali speaking areas). The pyramid of power had something of the following composition according to the 1901 Census. At the pinnacle stood 13,000 British who, secure in the control of government and the agency houses, formed one of the most exclusive and caste-conscious colonial elites in the Imperial world. Beneath them were 16,000 Anglo-Indians whose reliable sycophancy earned them guild-like control of positions in communications, transport and customs. The industry developing along Hooghly-side in the process of cotton and jute remained secure in European hands, while the burgeoning profits from inland trade in indigo, opium, jute, tea and sugar, etc. fell into the hands of a small community of Jews, Armenians, Bengali Hindu banking and trading castes, Gujerati Hindus and Muslims as well as Marwari Jain migrants from Rajputana. And as mentioned above the labour for services, transport, industry, etc. came from the rural immigrants from Bihar, up and other non-Bengali provinces. The remainder were Bengali and while a considerable proportion of these were *abhadra* (non-*bhadralok*) operating the marginal trades and markets, the majority were the white-collar, middle-class *bhadralok* who filled the offices, banks, courts, consulting rooms, schools and colleges of the metropolis (op. cit., p. 3. Figures from the *Census of India* 1901, Vol. I, pt. 1, p. 15).

India: as functionaries of alien rule, the *bbadralok* experienced intimate proximity to, but ultimate exclusion from, power.

The *bbadralok* reflected the essential ambiguity of all collaborating classes within Asian societies. Their vital role within the system of British rule stimulated the *bbadralok* appetite for political influence and power. But their lack of an *independence* grounded economically in control of capital, or socially in links with the proletariat and peasant masses, strictly compromised their politics and distorted their ideology: despite initiating the anti-Colonial movement, the *bbadralok* ultimately failed to mount a radical challenge and transform Bengali society.

The Bengal Renaissance

The first four decades of British dominance brought a swift upheaval to the vegetative tranquillity of society in Moghul Bengal. The rapid social change, as well as the cosmopolitan and colonial experience of the *bbadralok* began to register itself from about 1813 in a new intellectual awareness which grew until the turn of the 20th century. This period, called the Bengali Renaissance, is distinguished by the prodigious intellectual achievements of the *bbadralok* intelligentsia. Confronted with the overwhelming power of European domination they learnt English, French, Hebrew, Greek and Latin in search of the essence of the culture of the West.

Science, philosophy, social reform and western education were subjects of intense interest to the variously divergent social and intellectual currents of the Renaissance. But beyond agreement on the importance of European culture, the question of its relation to indigenous Hindu and Bengali society provoked deep and antagonistic splits. The dominant school—the ‘self-strengtheners’¹⁶ sought to incorporate western intellectual traditions in order both to adapt the *bbadralok* politically to the new colonial structure, as well as confirm their social hegemony over Bengali society within the overall framework of a renewed Hinduism. The ‘radicals’ on the other hand deployed the newly discovered intellectual tools not to reconstruct the inequalities and mystifications of a crumbling society, but to challenge them.

The outstanding figure of the period and the one who stamped the dominant themes for the ‘self-strengtheners’, was Ram Mohan Roy. Born in 1773 of a prominent landed family and himself long an employee of the East India Company where he learned excellent English, Ram Mohan’s class position was typically *bbadralok*. Ram Mohan forged an ideological anchor for his class in the swift social currents of the earlier colonial period. Confronted with the threat of Christian missionaries on the one hand and the decomposition of his own religious and social heritage on the other, Ram Mohan’s ambition was to borrow from the former in order to revitalize the latter. He learnt Hebrew and Greek and was in addition a considerable scholar of

¹⁶ The ‘self-strengtheners’ included two broad trends: the Westernized liberals on the one hand, represented for example by the *Brabmo Samaj*, and on the other hand the ‘traditionalists’, who tended to isolate themselves from western nationality. Both groups helped to establish the Landowners Association in 1858.

Persian and Sanskrit. He sought to unravel the philosophy and monotheism underlying Christianity, and with these he set out to reform the ideological and social practice of Hinduism. He translated the monotheistic Upanishads into Bengali, and founded the *Brahmo Samaj*, a society based on reason and tolerance which attempted reform of a number of Hinduism's archaic social practices—child marriage, *sati* (burning of widows on their husband's funeral pyre), etc. Right into the twentieth century the *Brahmo Samaj* was to form some of the greatest leaders of Bengali cultural and political life.

Politically Ram Mohan attempted to resolve the contradictions of his class—on the one hand leaders of a colonized population, on the other agents of the colonial power—by affirming a Whiggish ideal of progress: for Ram Mohan, a free India would emerge after a period of British tutelage, since English rule 'was creating a middle class in India which would lead to a popular movement of emancipation'.¹⁷ Within this context Ram Mohan agitated for an extension of civil and bourgeois freedoms: principal among these was the cause of the 'free press' which was burgeoning rapidly in Calcutta; abolition of discrimination against Indians in the judicial system of which the most notorious was the Jury Act and a programme of administrative reforms including such items as the Indianization of the civil service.¹⁸ Consistent with this programme was his prescription for political action—the reasoned petition couched in the language of universal rights—based on faith in an inevitable progress in parliamentary representation. These remained the dominant themes and tactics of middle-class Bengali politics throughout the remainder of the century.

The Derozians

The second generation of Bengali intellectuals was marked by the appearance of a group called 'Young Bengal', in the opinion of whose leader, Vivian Henry Derozio, an Eurasian from Calcutta, Ram Mohan and his movement went only 'half the way in religion and politics'. Within the short space of his twenty-three years, Derozio himself absorbed the works of such major figures as Adam Smith, Bentham, Berkeley, Locke, Mill, Hume and Kant, as well as being deeply in

¹⁷ Amit, Sen, *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance*, Calcutta 1957.

¹⁸ Neither was he insensitive to great events in the world outside. 'Freedom movements in the West sustained and intensified his love of liberty. If the suppression of liberty in Naples hurt him, the success of the cause of liberty in the Spanish Colonies in America and in France (the July Revolution of 1830) threw him into ecstasies of delight. No less was his jubilation when the Reform Bill was passed in 1832.' Nirmal Sinha, *Freedom Movement in Bengal, 1888-1904*, Calcutta 1968.

¹⁹ In one important respect, Ram Mohan transcended his class background. If criticism of the Permanent Settlement included the following programme—peasants' rights; (a) a permanent settlement for the cultivator, (b) public rent roll and (c) a peasant militia. But however genuinely enlightened such a programme, remained generally extraneous to Ram Mohan's own political thought, and certainly alien to the political behaviour of his class, which as we shall see was motivated by concrete fear of the peasant masses. Sinha, *ibid.*, p. 70 and *passim*.

fluenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, principally Rousseau.²⁰ Derozio gathered around him a constellation of young intellectuals who quickly rejected the intellectual pabulum of Ram Mohan's *Brahmo Samaj*. Rather than strengthen an atavistic culture their critique struck at the roots of Hinduism's elitist priesthood and mystification.²¹ On social issues the Derozians went beyond reform of abuses to expose the hideous inequality and repression of Bengali society. Derozians argued for the emancipation of women,²² the abolition of the caste system, and the liberation of the low and untouchable castes.²³ And whereas the *bhadralok* universally supported western education for their wealthy or poor brethren, Derozians promoted schemes for mass compulsory, state supported education among the peasantry,²⁴ female education, as well as a simplified style of the Bengali language which had become florid and incomprehensibly sanskritized in the hands of the literati.²⁵

In the field of ideas the Derozians broke through the cramping limitations of both their conquerors and their class. In the work of the 'self-strengtheners' it is not difficult to detect a retarding influence of British bourgeois culture. The British ruling class transmitted to the new Bengali elite a measure of its own high-minded hypocrisy and religiosity, its hide-bound traditionalism and blinkered empiricism, its narrow and mean utilitarianism in practical affairs. That is why too many of the *bhadralok* intelligentsia spent their time poring over the Bible and Jeremy Bentham. But the Derozians were more successful in

²⁰ Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* considerably influenced the Derozians. The danger of this Alexander Duff, the well-known Christian missionary, pointed out in no uncertain terms. It was, he observed, 'some wretched bookseller of the United States of America, who—basely taking advantage of the reported infidel of a new race of men in the East (meaning the Derozians), and apparently regarding no one but his silver dollars—dispatched to Calcutta cargo of that most malignant and pestiferous of all anti-Christian publications. From one ship a thousand copies were landed, and at first sold at the cheap rate of one rupee per copy; but such was the demand, that the price soon rose and after a few months, it was actually quintupled. Besides the separate copies of the *Age of Reason* there was also a cheap American edition, in one thick Volume of eight of Paine's works, including the *Rights of Man*, and other minor pieces, political and theological,' quoted by Benoy Ghosh, 'Calcutta, City of Renaissance', *Frontier*, 3 March 1973.

²¹ As a lecturer at Hindu College he gathered around him Bengal's young talent whose great passion was to discuss the leading issues of the day in the light of reason, and who took delight in escaping the totems and taboos of popular Hindu beliefs and practices. They 'cut their way through ham and beef and waded to liberalism through tumblers of beer.' Derozio was accused of being a corrupter of youth and was eventually dismissed from his job.

²² Debahinranjan Mukerji donated the site for Bethune College for Women, and was later forced out of Calcutta society. K. M. Banerji published a paper, 'Native female education' in which he supported mass education as the only means to emancipate women from male, and Hindu tyranny. Also, Peary Chand Mitra, and Radhanath Sikdar supported woman's rights in their monthly, *Marik Patrika*.

²³ Again K. M. Banerji wrote a blistering denunciation of Brahminical priesthood supporting the emancipation of Untouchables, and low caste. R. Sikdar, a diarist and mathematician wrote drawing attention to the oppression of coolies.

²⁴ Lal Behari Day, although not considered a Derozian reflected many of their ideas. In a vivid and relentless social novel, *Gorade Samasta*, he revealed the class structure of the zamindari system, and proposed a system of mass, compulsory education supported by a land tax.

²⁵ The Derozian *Marik Patrika*, founded in 1857, crusaded for a simplified style of Bengali to promote mass literacy.

penetrating the thick fog of British mystagogy and making themselves familiar with the achievements of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution. The tragedy of the Derozians was that their Enlightenment aspirations carried them far beyond the pre-occupations of their own class without allowing them to establish an organic link with the mass of the exploited and the oppressed. Almost every leading Derozian was to be disinherited or run out of respectable Hindu society. However the wider horizons they opened up were to be a permanent acquisition of Bengali culture and their tradition was perpetuated through the newspapers and associations they founded.²⁶ Although isolation and harassment was eventually to drive some of the leading Derozians to embrace Christianity, it remains the case that their movement sowed a seed of secular and radical nationalism that was to be in sharp contrast to the reactionary obscurantism that was to play such a large part in the subsequent history of the subcontinent.

Derozio's own hopes are best summed up in a poem he addressed to his pupils at the Hindu College:

Expanding like the petals of young flowers
 I watch the gentle opening of your minds,
 And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds
 Your intellectual energies and powers
 That stretch (like young birds in soft summer hours)
 Their wings to try their strength. O how the winds
 Of circumstances and freshening April showers
 Of early knowledge and outnumbered kinds
 Of new perceptions shed their influence,
 And how you worship truth's omnipotence:
 What joyance rains upon me when I see
 Fame in the mirror of futurity,
 Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain
 Ah then I feel I have not lived in vain.

The 'spell' that bound the intellectual energies and powers of Young Bengal was, regretfully, to prove most difficult to exorcise since it was intimately associated with the peculiar social formation that colonialism has created in the province. Confronted with the oppression of British rule even some of the latter-day Derozians were to search for consolations in India's past. The following poem by Madhusan Dutt suggests the polished literary form which the Bengal Renaissance was to give to *bhadralok* aspirations: the King Porus it invokes is, of course, the monarch defeated by Alexander—like the British, Indians find the celebration of their defeats morally more stimulating than the celebration of victories:

'But where, Oh! where is Porus now?
 And where the noble hearts that bled
 For freedom—with the heroic glow
 In patient bosoms nourished—

²⁶ Derozian papers included: the *Albion*, organ of Derozio's own Academic Association, *Mukherji's Magazine*, K. M. Banerji's *Enquirer*, and the *Bengal Spectator*.

Hearts, eagle-like that recked not death,
 And shrank before foul Thralldom's breath?
 And where art thou—Fair Freedom!—thou
 Once goddess of Ind's sunny clime!
 When glory's halo round her brow
 Shone radiant, and she rose sublime,
 Like her own towering Himalaye
 To kiss the blue clouds thron'd on high!
 Clime of the Sun!—How like a Dream—
 How like bright sun beams on a stream
 That melt beneath gray twilight's eye—
 That glory hath now flitted by!

These yearnings for the glory that had 'flitted by' were to prove particularly insubstantial during the Mutiny: this attempt to chase away the colonizers and restore the past by force of arms met the uncompromising hostility of every *bhadralok*. 'How like a Dream', indeed.

Thus the different strands of the Renaissance included those who imbibed the liberal ethos of British culture, others who wished to modernize Indian traditions as well as the more radical Derozians who attacked class and privilege but remained politically unorganized and alienated from a wider social base in Bengali society. The focus of *bhadralok* politics throughout the middle and later decades of the 19th century remained essentially that of enlightened collaborators: acceptance of the colonial order while agitating for reforms allowing a wider middle class participation in the power it created. The British were to nourish constitutionalism by setting up elective bodies with limited powers and on the basis of a narrow franchise.

The Bhadralok and the Peasantry

The peasantry did not meanwhile remain entirely passive under the arrangement imposed upon them by the colonial system. We noted above how the Permanent Settlement clarified the class stratification of agrarian society and placed the question of rent at the heart of rural social relations. Two major developments of the century, a rapid growth of population and the introduction of commercial crops, aggravated these relations, provoked a harsher oppression of the peasantry, and stimulated the emergence of organizations uniting Bengal's Muslim and Hindu cultivators.

The economic changes introduced by the British stimulated both the internal and international market demand for Bengal's agrarian produce from the beginning of the 19th century. The pace rapidly accelerated following 1870 when the revolution in industrial production and world communications—the growth of railways in Europe and North America as well as in India and Bengal, the opening of the Suez Canal drew Bengal into a much more tightly integrated world economy.²⁷

²⁷ Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri, 'Growth of commercial agriculture in Bengal—1859–1885', part I, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. VII, Number 1, March 1970, pp. 25–60; also A. Knowles, *The Industrial and Commercial Revolutions in Great Britain during the Nineteenth Century*, London 1930, p. 182.

Agrarian produce diversified and by the late 19th century involved a variety of commercial crops such as tea, indigo, rice, opium, jute and sugarcane distributed throughout the hinterland of the Bengal Presidency. Yet the powerful market stimulus these crops exerted on agriculture failed fundamentally to transform Bengal's production along capitalist lines.²⁸ The growth of commercial crops raised land values and agricultural prices, but these were met in step by increases in both rent and interest, and a lowering of buying price which together directed the increased surplus into the hands of rentiers and moneylenders. At the same time the demographic balance shifted against the peasantry, as the growth of population transformed Bengal from a land- to a labour-abundant economy. A plethora of labour and prospective tenants increased the landlord's leverage over the peasants.²⁹ Thus rather than bring increasing prosperity to Bengal's peasants, commercial cropping simply touched off intensified exploitation, while exposing all the more clearly the parasitic nature of Bengal's dominant rural classes.

The peasantry did not however accept the continual deterioration of their social and economic condition without protest. And while the *bhadralok* were captivated to distraction by the liberal spirit, the peasantry organized throughout the hinterland on economic and social issues affecting most of them more specifically. The three major peasant movements of the 19th century—*Fara'idi* or *Faraji* (1810–30), the Indigo Riots (1859–60), and the Pabna Rent Revolt (1873)—were manifestations of the ground swell of popular reaction to the colonial structure. Moreover, the politics surrounding these events expose clearly how relations between the various communal, social, and political blocs composing Bengali society centred upon the class issue of rents. The first of these movements, the *Faraji*, began as a form of Muslim revivalism to 'purify' the religious practices of Muslim Bengalis.³⁰ In Bengal the movement reflected the declining

²⁸ The reasons for this are: (a) capital remained largely in European hands who found it more expedient to make advances to the peasants on contract obliging them to sell the harvest often at a predetermined and non-market price; (b) commercial group production thus remained in the hands of the peasantry who organized it along traditional lines within the context of subsistence rice cultivation; and (c) what increased income market prices promised the cultivator was skimmed off by non-cultivating classes through rent, interests, and suppressed market prices. Cf. Chaudhuri, *ibid.*, part II, op. cit., Vol. VII, Number 2, June 1970, *passim*. The exception is tea which from the beginning was cultivated along modern capitalist lines on huge estates served by wage labour; but although stimulating the surrounding peasant economy, tea plantation remained entirely outside the context of peasant agriculture.

²⁹ The basic fact of Bengali rural life in the 19th century down to the present is that the majority of the landholdings is not sufficiently large to support the family who cultivate and live off them. The index of this fact is the overwhelming indebtedness of the Bengali peasantry which is recorded throughout the reports of official commissions and district officers, cf., Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri, 'Rural Credit relations in Bengal, 1859–1885' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. VI, Number 3, September 1969, pp. 203–58.

³⁰ The *Faraji* was merely the Bengali variant of the wider Wahabi movement throughout the Islamic world by which the Muslim forces retreating under the advances of European colonialism attempted to retrieve their lost social and political stature through ritual purification. In many communities such as in Bengal, once the movement took deep roots it was transformed along class lines.

position of the Muslim aristocracy and the subordination of the majority of Muslim peasantry to Hindu landlords. By propagating strict Islamic observances, the movement first tended to rend the syncretic cultural fabric which tied Hindu and Muslim cultivators in a common social life. By 1810 however, although maintaining its religious cover, it had broadened along class lines, beginning most significantly in the areas where a system of commercial indigo plantations was being organized by European capital. A prominent *Faraji* leader, Didu Mian, organized cultivators, whether Hindu or Muslim, against European planters as well as indigenous landlords and moneylenders, again regardless of religion. By 1830, Titu Mian, the former leader's nephew, came into violent conflict with the English planters and native landlords and after a number of successes declared an entire area a free zone and assumed the title of Khalif. The British dispatched the movement within a year and imprisoned or hung its leaders. Discontent however smouldered, laying the ground for the much wider Indigo Riots of 1859.³¹

Indigo plantations were initially set up in Bengal in 1779 by the East India Company in order to meet American and Spanish competition. West Indian planters with an intimate knowledge of slavery first organized production along the conventional system of advances but once indigo had a hold in the community, relied increasingly on physical coercion and legal manipulation to force the peasant to grow the plant at a loss. By 1859 thousands of peasants had withdrawn their labour and peasant organizations throughout the indigo districts resisted the repression of the planters and their armed retainers. The breadth of agitation compelled the government to initiate an official inquiry in 1860. And the combination of these factors broke the plantation system in lower Bengal, forcing the planters to move up-country to Bihar where they re-established their operations on fresh ground.³²

The response of the middle-class *bhadralok* to these peasant movements revealed their own specific class interests and correspondingly underlined their political limitations. They greeted the *Faraji* agitation with indifference, in contrast to their unstinting support for the Indigo Rioters. Although the latter event with its anti-colonial and national character was a watershed in the awakening of Bengal's political consciousness, the alliance between the middle and rural classes concealed a fundamental ambiguity; for whereas the *Faraji* movement was directed against the *zamindari* system to which *bhadralok* interests were intimately tied, the Indigo Riots focused much more on European planters. Moreover, although indigo plantation failed to interfere in production itself it did advance new credit agencies which uprooted local *mahajans*—moneylenders—who were the central pillars of *zamindari* exploitation.³³ Thus the *bhadralok* aligned with the peasantry in specific political opposition to the Europeans, while opposing

³¹ Muin-ud Din Ahmad Khan, *The Farajī movement*, Karachi 1965.

³² B. Blair Kling, *The Blue Masses*, Pennsylvania, 1966 and Dinabandhu Mitra, *Nil Darpan*.

³³ Chaudhuri, *ibid.*, part II, p. 229

generally these interests of the peasantry which were at variance with their own. The exceedingly tenuous basis of these alliances became much clearer during the Pabna Rent Revolt when no Europeans were involved.

The principal *parganas* (administrative units) of Pabna, which comprised the Raja of Notore's estate, were partitioned and bought up by the new squirearchy—the Tagores of Calcutta, the Banerjees of Dacca, the Sanyals of Sallop, the Parrasis of Sathal and the Bhaduris of Porjona.³⁴ As elsewhere these pillars sunk increasingly deep into the peasant's land through rackrents and a myriad of extra-legal exactions. The predominantly Muslim peasantry organized against the landlord in the Pabna Agrarian League, a peasants union whose programme was clearly defined in terms of rent and similar issues and which significantly, was under the leadership of two Hindus, Ishan Chandra Roy and Shambhunath Pal. A movement of general protest against absentee landlordism in the cash crop producing districts of East and Central Bengal, it brought to official attention the inadequacies of the existing law which regulated these agrarian relations. The landed *bhadralok* were quick to respond to the Government instituted inquiry, threatening legislation which might benefit the peasants. Under the leadership of the Tagores, whose own estates were in question, the British Indian Association vigorously opposed any government intervention in tenant relations as a violation of the covenant between Government and the landlords established by the Permanent Settlement. Moreover organs of landlord opinion, the *Hindoo Patriot*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Halisabhar Patrika*, indulged in the most odious obscurantism by claiming the League represented nothing more than the rabid communalism of Muslims bent on the plunder and arson of their Hindu neighbours. Despite these reactionary pressures the government instituted the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, partially relieving the landlords' grip on the cultivators by regulating questions of rent and conditions of property distraint.³⁵

It is significant that while the mass action of the peasantry forced the British to make major changes in the agrarian structure such as the displacement of indigo plantations from lower Bengal, and the Tenancy Act of 1885, the constitutionalism of the Bengali liberals failed to achieve anything but minor concessions on issues that were of specific

³⁴ The family tree of Rabindranath Tagore, Bengal's world renowned poet, illustrates how the blossoms of *bhadralok* literary genius were firmly rooted in collaboration, graft and landlordism which brought the Hindu elites to the top in the wake of British conquest. Jaya Ram, ancestor of the Tagore family of Bengal, took active part in the settlement of the 24 *Parganas* belonging to the East India Company. His second son Darpa Narayan learned English and French and through serving the French in Chittagong earned a huge fortune with which he bought a large *zaminda* in Rajshahi. Dwarkanath Tagore, *bhadralok* notable of Ram Mohan's generation and founder of the Landowners Association in 1838, descended from a junior branch of the family. Born in 1794 he learned English and Persian and became a law agent through which he acquired the landed property in Pabna. 'But it seems that his fortunes arose from his service as *scribble dar* (head clerk) to the Salt Agent and Collector of the 24 *Parganas* where he became a Diwan to the Agency.' M. Mian *The Indian Middle Classes*, London 1961, p. 127.

³⁵ Gupta, Kalyan Kumar Sen, 'The agrarian League of Pabna, 1873', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. VII, Number 2, June 1970, pp. 253-70.

interest to them and hence of limited value to the great majority, such as the legislative and administrative reform, the Vernacular Press Act, etc. It is against this agrarian background of unrest and middle class response that the political character of the Bengal Renaissance attains a clearer focus.

As the father of the Bengali Renaissance, Ram Mohan appears to be a classically bourgeois figure: rational in intellect, liberal in social matters, naive in his optimism concerning political progress. There were however two crucial differences between him and other members of his generation, and the typical enlightenment figure of the West. First, far from standing at the head of commerce, finance and industry which were carrying the European bourgeoisie to world hegemony, Ram Mohan represented a class based on land in a pre-capitalist society subordinated to colonial power. And second, for all his rationality, Ram Mohan and the self-strengtheners clothed their intellect in the imagery of a Hinduism retrieved from decadent priestcraft and brought back to respectability.

And as the Whiggish optimism of his generation wore away under frustration at failure to achieve any significant political progress under British rule, constitutional reform was rapidly replaced after the turn of the century by mass anti-colonial militancy. But the *bhadralok*, unlike the Enlightenment bourgeoisie in Europe could not give leadership to the mass movement on the basis of progressive economic and social issues.³⁶ They were themselves the product of the most retrograde social forces—rural rents and metropolitan collaboration; the only social base of anti-colonial power, their own tenants, presented a greater threat to their position than the British themselves. Renaissance politics stabilized the conflicting position of the *bhadralok* between the masses and the British into a Janus-like posture which looked to the colonial masters for enlightened reform, while turning the dark face of repression to the countryside. But under the pressures of mass unrest this posture became increasingly difficult to maintain. Against British repression, *bhadralok* enlightenment lost ground, while the threat of mass politicization persuaded significant sections of their class to seek in religion a bond with the peasant masses which material interest could not provide. And the continuing potency of religion must be seen as the ideological deposit of pre-capitalist social relations which imperialism had failed to transform. Over the next forty years the contradictions of the *bhadralok* were to play themselves out in the concrete politics of the period.

The Indian Association

From 1880 the general crisis of Bengali society was beginning to be felt among the ranks of the *bhadralok* themselves. The growth of

³⁶ There were instances where the *bhadralok* were able to generate forward looking ideas. But it was their weakness that they failed to develop or incorporate them into a meaningful programme of social and economic change. This concept of Swadeshi is a case in point. Its implications of Self Help pertaining to the production of indigenous products and entailing mass education among the peasantry never reached its full potential under their leadership. Yet in the hands of Gandhi aspects of this concept were used to devastating effect in later years.

population along with an increased subinfeudation of landed estates combined to raise *bbadralok* numbers while simultaneously reducing the sources of landed income. Second, the Muslims responded to the colonial order—delayed by a generation—by placing their young on the competitive market for middle-class urban employment. And third, the up-country administrative and professional jobs which were formerly a *bbadralok* monopoly were increasingly reserved by the government for the growing numbers of the educated in the local community. As a net result the *bbadralok* were becoming more numerous as sources of employment and income declined. Increasing numbers of them were losing intimate touch with the village, becoming more Calcutta-based and dependent exclusively on urban employment. Thus the quarter of a century preceding the Partition of Bengal in 1905 is marked by the gradual emergence of class divisions within the *bbadralok*, between the older and landed families of the Renaissance generation and the concentrated Calcutta petty-bourgeoisie which was increasingly to become the gravitational centre of *bbadralok* politics.

These social changes were responsible for mounting alienation from British rule, as well as the growth of more politicized and effective forms of organization which characterized the period between 1880 and 1905.

These developments led to the formation of the Indian Association. Among its founding members was a Derozian—Krisnan Mohan Banerjee—and an energetic politician Surendranath Banerjee, who returned from Europe influenced strongly by the Italian nationalist, Mazzini.³⁷ Banerjee had been dismissed from the Indian Civil Service for a minor misdemeanour which would have earned no more than a reprimand for an Englishman. He declared, 'I felt that I had suffered because I was an Indian, a member of a community that lay disorganized, had no public opinion and no voice in the counsels of government.'

Banerjee's association formed around the events of the Pabna Rent Revolt. Supporting the peasantry, the Indian Association split with the British Indian Association of the Tagores and the *bbadralok* gentry. Moreover with the success of the peasantry consolidated in the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, Surendranath turned increasingly to the rural areas of Bengal as the social base for anti-British political activity. But although attracting mass audiences as he travelled throughout the hinterland, Surendranath addressed the peasants on classically urban and *bbadralok* concerns of the freedom of the press, native representation on the Legislative Council and civil service reform

³⁷ Banerjee was soon campaigning all over India against one of Lord Lytton's many reactionary measures and Sir Henry Cotton, a distinguished civil servant, testifies to his success: 'The idea of any Bengalee influence in the Punjab would have been a conception incredible to Lord Lawrence . . . yet it is the case that during the past year the tour of a Bengalee lecturer lecturing in English in Upper India, assumed the character of a triumphal progress; and at the present moment the name of Surendranath Banerjee excites as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Hindus as in Dacca.' R. C. Majumdar, et al., *An Advanced History of India*, p. 890.

Although not ignoring the question of rents, Surendranath's strategy was to stimulate peasant support for middle-class interests. And although mass meetings on civil liberties represented considerable progress on the petty-fogging constitutionalism of the British Indian Association, it failed to transcend the basic contradiction of *bbadralok* politics: any radical challenge—that is, questioning forms of property—to colonial authority threatened the social authority of its collaborators, the *bbadralok* themselves. Thus by exposing the abuses of the British, the new forms of agitation introduced by the Indian Association accelerated the cycle of alienation, colonial repression and mass militancy without providing the forms of class organization necessary if social unrest were to be politically effective.

It is at this point that the conflicting currents of the Renaissance movement separated. For the secular and nationalist tendencies of the Indian Association threatened to unearth popular forces the *bbadralok* could not control. It was left to the 'self-strengtheners' to produce a form of religious nationalism allowing the *bbadralok* to contain and lead a mass movement which might otherwise sweep them away. The turn of the 20th century was marked by the emergence of a radical anti-British feeling cloaked in the symbols of Hindu revivalism.

Militant Revivalism

The cultural heritage of the Renaissance was pressed into political service shortly after the turn of the century. The 'self-strengtheners' had restored Bengal's ideological armoury with newly burnished Hindu cult figures, while poems, songs, novels and other recently turned genre became instruments to engrave the mass consciousness with vivid and militant religious images. Poets, literati and religious leaders such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee proved skilful craftsmen in fusing political purpose with an evocative symbolism. The popular cult of *Sakti*, the traditional Brahmanical goddess of Divine Destruction and Cosmic Renewal provides an example.³⁸ For worship of *Sakti* offered a supernatural ally in, and justification for, the anti-colonial struggle, while simultaneously ratifying the existing social order: at a stroke the secular and religious contradictions underlying the Western inspired Bengali Renaissance dissolved in atavistic indulgence. Under the inspiration of the Hindu pantheon and the leadership of the ritually superior castes, Bengal would regenerate, purge itself of the defeatism and passivity, and return to the Golden Age of independence and purity of classical Brahmanism. The Hindu reformer and revivalist Swami Vivekananda popularized such prayers as 'Oh, Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness and make me a man' while later 'spiritual' leaders such as Aurobindo Ghosh and Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya blended political terrorism, Hindu ascendancy and Indian nationalism in a mystagogic vision comparable to that of Mother Russia and the Orthodox Church in the eyes of the Pan Slavs. As the confrontation between the Bengalis and the British escalated, religion was tossed in to fuel the national

³⁸ Bankim Broomfield, *ibid.*, p. 16.

consciousness.³⁹ This revivalism tended, however, to be even more pronounced outside Bengal and it was Tilak, a Bombay Congressman, who was to be most influential in importing it into the national movement. Bengali revivalism could never entirely escape adulteration by the rationalist themes of the Renaissance.

The British Strategy and Partition

The British response to the pressures of mass politics was the classic tactic of divide and rule. H. H. Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India, put it succinctly: 'Bengal united is a power. Bengal divided will pull in different ways. That is what the Congress leaders feel; their apprehensions are perfectly correct and they form one of the great merits of the scheme. . . . It is not altogether easy to reply in a despatch which is sure to be published without disclosing the fact that . . . one of our main objects is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.'⁴⁰

The *bhadralok* themselves had prepared the ground. For to the extent Hindu revivalism threatened the British, it divided Bengali society internally: generating opponents to itself and potential allies for the British. The colonial policy was merely to switch patronage to the Muslims with the same intention and effect as over a century ago when supreme favour was directed to the *bhadralok*: 'A separate administration, a separate High Court, and a separate University at Dacca would give extra opportunities to the Muslim middle class to emerge from their backward state and weaken the economic base of the Hindu middle classes. The Hindu *zamindari* patrons to the Congress would find the Muslim peasantry ranged against them, secure in support of the Dacca Secretariat. It would divide the nationalist ranks once and for all.'⁴¹ The structure of collaboration which had brought the *bhadralok* to prominence was used against them immediately middle class politics proved obstreperous. Curzon visited Dacca, the centre of Muslim Bengal, and made clear to the Nawab and other Muslim dignitaries how advantageous a partition of Bengal would be to the Muslims. In July 1905 the scheme for Partition was announced and it was to take effect from October of that year. The response from Hindu Bengal was electrifying. One of the leading papers of the day, which carried as its motto the slogan 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', issued a call for the boycott of foreign goods. There were mammoth meetings and demonstrations where foreign cloth was ceremonially burnt. The slogan now was to buy *swadeshi* (domestically produced goods). The rich dispensed with their British-made luxuries; women came out of the seclusion of their homes to demonstrate; school and college students emerged from their institutions in procession; landlords, businessmen and professional people—all merged with the popular tide. It was the first mass movement of modern India; its bard was Rabindranath Tagore and its tribune the fiery Bepin Chandra Pal.⁴²

³⁹ A. Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge*, Calcutta 1969.

⁴⁰ Op. cit., p. 95.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 157.

⁴² Nirmal Sinha, *The Freedom Movement in Bengal, 1818-1904*, Calcutta, 1953.

The Swadeshi Movement

Even though the idea of *swadeshi* had its roots in the Hindu *mela* (fair) there was every reason to believe that this agitation was ideally suited to the ambitions of a secular, bourgeois nationalist movement. Among the first to benefit from the boycott and burning of British cloth would be the large number of Muslim weavers. Moreover only stooges of the British, such as the Nawab of Dacca, had declared themselves in favour of Partition. Other leading Muslims declared against it such as Abdul Rasul, Abdul Halim Ghaznavi of Mymensingh, Abdul Kasem of Burdwan and Liakat Hossain. Moreover the secretary of the Muslim College at Aligarh, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, reported that he and his colleagues were finding it increasingly difficult to keep the younger students away from the Congress. Rabindranath Tagore appeared to encourage such developments when he declared on Rakhibandana Day that all Bengalis, 'Hindus and Muslims, living in the separated parts of Bengal, were blood brothers'. Unfortunately these sentiments were only likely to reach the ears of the tiny minority of educated Muslims. It was essential for the leaders of the anti-Partition movement to communicate with the great mass of Muslims who constituted the majority of the population of Bengal. Instead these leaders chose to employ every device of Hindu revivalism from the very first day of the struggle.

On the day of Partition, 16 October, there took place memorable symbols of mass protest, charged with religious overtones. The *rakhi* thread was tied to the wrist of every friend, masses of Hindus ritually bathed themselves in the Ganges, emerging to dedicate themselves to the anti-Partition struggle in front of the image of the goddess *Sakti*. B. C. Pal had vigorously defended such symbolism as the best way of popularizing nationalism. In his book *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism* he wrote of the goddess *Sakti*: 'It is impossible to conceive a better or more inspiring symbol of the Race-Spirit than this, and it is not at all strange that thousands of Bengali Hindus should stand before it and cry *Bande Mataram*.'⁴³ A nationalist paper, the *Hindu Patriot*, had declared on 22 September that 'the induction of a religious element into the movement will serve as a powerful stimulus, securing its perpetuity, for nothing catches so easily in this country as religious fervour'. Indeed the religious appeal must have seemed particularly convenient. It would provide a common bond with the large non-Bengali population of Calcutta and would help to insure against any inconvenient intrusion of class consciousness amongst oppressed or exploited Hindus. What it left out of account was only the vast mass of Muslims who could not conceivably join in devotion to *Sakti* or shout '*Bande Mataram*'. For too many Hindu *bhadralok* the Muslims did not really exist except as objects of occasional high-minded concern. Even Rabindranath Tagore, who was certainly no communalist, somehow never managed to write a single verse celebrating a Muslim hero. Like other great Bengali poets he always looked to Sikhs, Rajputs or Marāthas for the glorious personages in his poetry. Thus some of the most generous

⁴³ B. C. Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, London 1906, pp. 36-7.

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aspirations expressed in the poetry written by Bengali Hindus of this time can have had little appeal to the Muslim. Rangalal's 'Ode to Liberty' is a case in point. It starts with the famous line 'Breathes there the man who would like to live, shorn of liberty'. Muslim appreciation of this splendid sentiment could scarcely be enhanced by the fact that it is put in the mouth of a Rajput fighting for his country against the Muslims. No doubt the historical background of Muslim domination of India was a greatly complicating factor, but any politically aware *bbadralok* leader should have been able to separate this background from the fact that the majority of his fellow Bengalis, including some of the most oppressed and downtrodden, were Muslim and that their support would be essential to a successful national movement. One of the few to grasp this was Surendranath Banajee who warned of the dangers of playing exclusively on Hindu themes. In fact there is some sign that there was an attempt to make a religious appeal to the Muslim masses too and to combine it with the impressive Hindu mobilizations.⁴⁴ However to imagine that the spirit of communal pride could be encouraged among both Hindu and Muslim without unleashing communal antagonism at the same time was a dangerous miscalculation. Naturally the British authorities did not hesitate to take full advantage of any communal division.⁴⁵ Indeed, as we have seen, the British had all along conceived the Partition plan with the aim of undermining the national movement.

The Muslim League

The fruit of British manoeuvres was the formation of the Muslim League on 30 December 1906, under the leadership of the late Agha Khan and the Nawab of Dacca, Salimullah Khan. The League's programme contained the following objectives: 'to promote loyalty to the British Government, to protect and advance the political rights and interests of Mussalmans of India and respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to Government and to prevent the rise among Mussalmans of any feelings of prejudice to the other objects of the League'. Tripathi makes the apt comment that, 'the League started by declaring the partition as beneficial to the Moslem interests and condemned all methods of agitation like boycotting. Hence it would never really have to fulfill the third pious wish. Sir Syed's legacy was safe in the hands of the Aligarh and Bengal Nawabs. It would be pro-landlord and pro-British and anti-Bourgeois and anti-Hindu'.⁴⁶

Muslim groups in East Bengal soon clashed with *Swadeshi* demon-

⁴⁴ A number of Muslims attended *Swadeshi* meetings. In certain areas, 'particularly Barisal, the Muslim masses joined the Swadeshi movement and were inspired by folk songs composed for the purpose. . . . The mingled shouts of "Alla-ho-Akbar" and "Bande-Mataram" by Hindus and Mussalmans formed a characteristic feature of these meetings, and processions'. R. C. Majumdar, 'History of the Freedom Movement in India', Vol. II, p. 112. This historian is generally uncritical of Hindu revivalism. For an analysis of the relations between the two communities see Sumit Sarkar, 'Hindu-Muslim Relations in Swadeshi Bengal, 1903-1908', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2.

⁴⁵ A. Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge*, p. 161.

⁴⁶ A. Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge*, pp. 165-66.

strators, and two communal riots in Comilla and Jamalpur proved particularly vicious. Lord Minto, the Viceroy, noted with some relish that, 'they will be a useful reminder to the people in England that the Bengali is not everybody in India, in fact the Mohammedan community, when roused would be a much stronger and more dangerous factor to deal with than the Bengalis'.⁴⁷

The Partition provoked an upheaval of protest and agitation which registered opposition to colonial policy not only from Bengal, but from the whole of India.⁴⁸ Between 1905 and 1911 mass demonstrations, *Swadeshi* campaigns (Buy-Indian boycott of British goods) and political terrorism shook British confidence and undermined the overall effectiveness of their rule. The British were forced to give way, and in 1911 Partition was annulled and Bengal reunited. The moment was greeted with an avalanche of popular enthusiasm. The reversal of Partition was taken as a triumph of anti-Colonialism and evidence of a rapidly growing national consciousness. But the fanfare concealed the persistence of *bhadralok* contradictions which this time had left their politics all the more contradictory, and Bengali society divided and weak.

In a society united in oppression, but riddled with religious, ethnic, linguistic, caste and cultural divisions, Hindu revivalism left large blocs of the Bengali population completely inert, if not, as among the Muslims, actively resistant. The *Swadeshi* movement and mass demonstrations were mostly urban and middle class phenomena, exposing the extent to which the *bhadralok* were isolated from the *namasudras* (low-caste cultivators), Assamese, Biharis, Marwaris, Oriyas, etc., as well, as from the nascent working class. 1911 therefore marked the defeat of the British and the first success of Indian nationalism but at the high price of distorting the national consciousness through religion, implanting communalism as a virulent factor in Bengali politics and isolating the *bhadralok* leadership from the breadth of Bengali society. As a 'crowning blow' the British moved their capital from Calcutta to the formerly Moghul seat at Delhi. And thus the *bhadralok*, bred in colonial corridors, found the much coveted state apparatus wrenched from their grasp and planted in the distant territory of North India. After a century on the threshold of power they rediscovered themselves in their traditional position on the periphery of South Asian politics. 1911 thus marked a watershed in Bengali politics: it signalled a triumph in the national movement, but also divulged the weaknesses of a class caught in a thoroughly contradictory position half-way between the colonial power above and the popular masses below, half-way between the archaic practices of the *zamindars* and traditional religion on the one

⁴⁷ Quoted in A. Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge*, pp. 164-65. See also Hiren Chakrabarti, 'Government and Bengal Terrorism, 1912-1918' in *Bengal Past and Present*, July-December 1971. For a broad account of a later period see R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vols. II and III.

⁴⁸ In his presidential address to the Benares session of the Congress in 1905, G. K. Gokhale remarked: 'The most outstanding fact of the situation is that the public life of this country has received an accession of strength of great importance and for this India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Bengal....'

hand and a bourgeois-democratic revolution on the other.⁴⁹

Developments following the anti-Partition struggle had a radical impact on Bengali politics, leading to an even more profound split than that between the 'self-strengtheners' and the Derozians. Firstly there was a purely collaborationist upper stratum of *bhadralok* who were determined to serve the raj more faithfully than ever before; despite the movement of the capital to Delhi there continued to be openings for servile and highly educated Bengalis in the upper reaches of the judiciary and administration, loyally aspiring to a knighthood or an OBE. Advancement of this sort could not offer any solution to the bulk of the *bhadralok* however. The experience of the struggle against Partition had encouraged a radicalization of Bengali politics of a highly specific sort. On the one hand the fierce clash with the imperial power had shaken the old belief in constitutional progress; on the other the explosive popular response, with its communalist overtones and Muslim backlash, had provoked alarm among the *bhadralok* elite. Up to this time Bengalis had been very prominent in the affairs of Congress. Between 1885 and 1909 there were just under 20,000 delegates to sessions of Congress of whom nearly 4,000 were Bengalis (the other leading areas were Bombay and Madras). After the beginning of the struggle against Partition Bengalis were prominent in the so-called 'Extremist' wing of the Congress and it was at this time that a number of younger militants formed a terrorist association to combat the British. Very frequently those who were most 'extremist' were also most enthusiastic about Hindu revivalism and, conversely some of the more prominent opponents of communalism reconciled themselves with the colonial power, perhaps out of a feeling that they did not have the mass basis to challenge it. The two main terrorist associations, *Anusilan Samiti* and the *Jugantar Party*, were exclusively Hindu; among the initiation rites for a new member would be bathing in the Ganges and dedication to *Sakti*. In theory the aim of the terrorists was to annihilate the top ranks of the British raj through the bomb and the bullet. Unsuccessful attempts were made on the lives of the Governor of Bengal and the Viceroy, though the terrorists were more successful in killing supposed renegades and traitors within their own ranks. Although these movements did signal a break with the traditional *bhadralok* politics of constitutional petition, they did not break with their equally pernicious revivalism and elitism.

⁴⁹ Tagore sought solace in the dream of Eastern spirituality to which M. N. Roy, perhaps the last spiritual heir of the Derozians, made a sharp rejoinder: 'The belief in India's spiritual message to the materialist West is heady wine. It is time to realize that the pleasant inebriation (it produced) offered a solace to proud intellectuals with inferiority complexes. The legacy of that psychological aggressiveness is not an asset but a liability.' Elsewhere he was more directly critical of Tagore's idealization of India's past: 'His solution to the present social problem is to replace the existing form of property-relations by an earlier form, already left behind in the evolution of modern civilization. He would replace capitalism by patriarcho-feudal aristocracy. He begrudges the working-class that relatively higher standard of living which incidentally follows an improvement in social production. He is against modern industrialism because it disrupts the class of landed aristocracy to which he belongs.' Quoted in Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West*, pp. 263 and 261-62.

The Role of the 'big Babus'

The emergence of terrorism, communalism and the beginnings of popular militancy were calculated to alarm the old-style Bengali leaders. On the death of Edward VII Surendranath Banerjee went so far as to express his sorrow at the departure of the King-Emperor on bended knee at a public meeting. And in the subsequent period even the so-called 'extremist' Congress leaders drew back from really involving the masses in the national movement. The caution of the Bengali Congress leaders when it came to methods of mass agitation became very clear after Gandhi sought to introduce a new style into Congress politics at the time of the First World War and afterwards. Gandhi was by no means more hostile to the colonial power than the traditional leaders of Congress: he even engaged in a recruiting campaign for the British Army during the latter stages of the war. Yet Gandhi was prepared to take up on a mass scale the very themes and tactics of agitation which the Bengali Congress leaders had pioneered but not pursued. It was not just that Gandhi widened the basis of the national movement; there was also a marked hesitation among many Bengali Congress politicians to repeat agitational tactics which had yielded such ambiguous results during the anti-Partition struggle. On the other hand younger Bengalis, who had broken with Congress conservatism and timidity, were distinctly unimpressed by the Mahatma's blend of moderation and moralism. They were to be drawn to terrorist conspiracies rather than *satyagraha* and passive resistance. Thus in the summer of 1917 Gandhi urged a mass passive resistance campaign in protest at the internment of Annie Besant, a Theosophist who had helped to found the Indian Home Rule Movement. In the subsequent agitation non-Bengali Congress politicians were to complain 'only Bengal is giving us half-hearted support. The fact is that in Bengal the old leaders can't bring themselves into line with new developments and the younger men don't believe in constitutional agitation. Besides, it is characteristic of Bengal, that unless it is directly touched by anything it does not move.'⁵⁰

Gandhi's subsequent moves were to evoke a particularly ambiguous response from the Bengali Congress leaders. On the one hand it was men like C. R. Das who pressed Gandhi to develop Congress as a secular and modern political organization; on the other hand many Bengali Congress politicians were to be found in the ranks of those who resisted the mass non-co-operation movements launched by Gandhi. Thus at the time of the 1920 non-co-operation movement the Bengal Government reported 'Non-co-operation in practice may be said to be dead in Bengal, Gandhi is regarded with veneration and any abuse of him would not be allowed, but his non-co-operation programme is regarded almost with the tolerance extended to children's games.'⁵¹ Of course the tactics of non-co-operation with the colonial

⁵⁰ T. B. Sapru to Sita Ram, 30 June 1917; quoted by Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, London 1972, p. 143. This book is a valuable addition to the literature on the Indian national movement.

⁵¹ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

power threatened the livelihood of the many *bhadralok* who remained its servants. However a recent history of this period points out that: 'non-co-operation was taking root among groups who had been untouched by *bhadralok* pioneers of nationalist politics, and were unlikely to produce statistics for non-co-operation in terms of withdrawal of lawyers, title holders or council members. Among them were the poorer Hindus for whom *Nayak* spoke when it denounced *bhadralok* nationalism as "a diplomatic manoeuvre to deceive the ruling class and to earn celebrity" by the "Babus of Calcutta and the mossafil, including the Moderates and the Extremists, the democrats and the aristocrats". The same paper commented after [the Conference at] Calcutta, "Congress has at last become the property of businessmen, shopkeepers, agriculturalists and the people at large. It is they who constitute the present Congress and they are the guardians and protectors of non-co-operation which will be spread and circulated by them." It was no use, explained *Nayak*, to expect the *bhadralok*, "the big Babus", to counteract non-co-operation: they could not converse with lesser folk who could not understand their English or anglicized Bengali even had they been willing to go into the villages to explain their politics. The Muslims of Bengal, similarly outside the range of the "big Babus", were also deeply stirred by Gandhian non-co-operation, because the Mahatma had Muslim preachers as an intermediary layer of mobilizers for his cause.³² Those stimulated into political activity by the non-co-operation movement of 1920-22 were to discover that Gandhi would develop reservations about the struggle not so different from those of the 'big Babus'. A brief recapitulation of Gandhi's entry into the national movement will illuminate the reasons for this.

Gandhi's Debut

We noted earlier how in the late 1860s the Bengali peasantry forced European indigo plantations out of Bengal to settle in upper Bihar. It was in the district of Champaran where the indigo system established deep roots and provoked the same class antagonism that Gandhi made his debut in Indian mass politics. In a tactic evocative of Bengali middle class response to the Indigo movement, Gandhi focused on exploitation by the *European* indigo planters while leaving the structure of the *zamindari* system completely unquestioned. Class feeling among the peasantry was politically exploited, but the peasants' concrete socio-economic interests were barely met. N. G. Ranga, at the time a critic from the left, was later to remark, 'Just as the earlier Congress agitation led by Romesh Chandra Dutt against temporary settlements did not embrace the exploitation of the *zamindars*, so also this agitation led by the Mahatma in Champaran did not lead up to any fight against the main causes for the terrible poverty and sufferings of Champaran peasants, namely the excessive rents and exorbitant incidence of debts. . . . It does strike us as rather significant that both he (Gandhi) and Rajen Prasad should have remained scrupulously silent upon the ravages of *zamindari* system.'

³² Brown, op. cit., p. 280.

Another onlooker was to comment: 'I am told that Mr Gandhi was at one time anxious to extend his investigations to the whole field of relations between the *zamindars* and their tenants. It is well known that the disabilities of the tenants are by no means confined to the indigo plantations owned by Europeans. But the local politicians cannot afford to set the *zamindar* party against themselves and that is the reason why Mr Gandhi's investigations are so much restricted.'⁵³ And even against the Europeans Gandhi employed peaceful and restrained agitation designed to bring about a favourable intervention from the authorities. Indeed Gandhi argued that campaigns of this sort were aimed to strengthen the true purposes of the raj. During his subsequent agitation for a remission of the land tax in view of the bad harvest in Kaira he declared: 'I venture to suggest that the Commissioner's attitude constitutes a peril far greater than the German peril, and I am serving the Empire in trying to deliver it from the peril within.'⁵⁴ As much of Gandhi's subsequent activity was to show, he greatly valued the British connection and looked forward to its survival even after the achievement of *Swaraj* (his deliberately vague term for self-government). Further limitations of the Gandhian approach were to be revealed in his intervention in the dispute at the Ahmedabad mills in 1918. Given the complete inexperience of Indian workers in trade union agitation Gandhi's intervention no doubt assisted the Ahmedabad workers' movement. However his own predilection for solving labour disputes with moralistic appeals to the owners led him in the end to threaten them that he would fast until they conceded the workers' demands. The local District Magistrate wrote that this decision had been prompted by Gandhi's desire to allay the workers' suspicions about his relations with the mill-owners. 'The weavers assailed him bitterly for being a friend of the mill-owners, riding in their motor-cars and eating sumptuously with them, while the weavers were starving. It was at this point and when stung by these taunts that Gandhi took his vow that he would eat no food until the weavers' terms were granted by the millowners.'⁵⁵ On their own terms all these preliminary skirmishes were successful. It was not until Gandhi was in a position to launch an all-India non-co-operation and *swadeshi* campaign in 1920-21 that he ran into precisely the sort of problems that had erupted during the anti-partition movement.

Although Gandhi's conception of the Indian national struggle was deeply religious, he was also most concerned to develop a Hindu-Muslim alliance. His recipe for this alliance was to be a combination of Hindu revivalism and Muslim revivalism. During the latter stages of the war the Indian Muslim community was greatly concerned at the fate of the Caliphate in the event of Turkey being on the losing side. Gandhi was able to garner considerable support among leaders of the Muslim community by espousing this cause. It was mainly for this reason that Gandhi was able to draw on Muslim support when he came to challenge the old leaders of Congress. At the Calcutta and

⁵³ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁵⁴ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁵⁵ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

Nagpur conferences of Congress in 1920 his plan for national non-co-operation triumphed. The subsequent agitations led to massive popular involvement in the national movement which it had generally lacked up to this point. However by the latter half of 1922 the movement had gone far beyond the bounds laid down by Gandhi concerning the proper methods of pursuing *Swara*. Neither Gandhi nor Congress had a well organized political machine in most parts of the sub-continent. Consequently they were quite unable to control the pent-up social forces released by their campaign of opposition to the Government. In Malabar, for example, impoverished Muslim peasants broke out in open rebellion slaughtering and pillaging their Hindu landlords and neighbours. The Viceroy was to report: 'The lower classes in the towns have been seriously affected by the non-co-operation movement. In certain areas the peasantry have been affected, particularly in parts of the Assam valley, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa and Bengal. As regards the Punjab, the Akali agitation has penetrated to the rural Sikhs. A large proportion of the Mahomedan population throughout the country are embittered and sullen.'⁵⁶ In Bengal itself several thousand 'Volunteers' were organized to prosecute the non-co-operation movement. The Bengal Government complained that its police were 'terrorized' by the Volunteers. It declared: 'Reference has already been made to the change in status of the men enlisted in this way. They are now distinctly of a lower class than at first, and are backed by the riff-raff of the town, recruited on payment of a daily wage to do whatever work is demanded of them.'⁵⁷ The British fear of the Volunteers came from an acute awareness that their rule rested on an extremely slender base of material force. However, Gandhi was as concerned as the British at the course the movement was taking. In February 1922 twenty-two policemen in Chauri Chaura, up, were killed in the course of a peasant disturbance. Horrified by 'the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura' Gandhi took it on himself to call off the whole non-co-operation movement. The Resolution ending non-co-operation also stated: 'The Working Committee advises Congress workers and organizations to inform the peasants that withholding of rent payment to *zamindars* is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country.' In fact rural notables were to become the backbone of Congress organization in the countryside; not the large feudal landowners so much as smaller landowners, rich peasants and the rural middle class. Thus the same resolution went on to assure 'the *zamindars* that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights, and that even where the ryots have grievances, the Committee declares that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration'⁵⁸

Hindu-Muslim Tensions

Although Gandhi was able to protect the class character of Congress

⁵⁶ A. R. Desai, *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay 1966, p. 189. This book furnishes an excellent introduction to the study of the Indian national movement.

⁵⁷ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

⁵⁸ Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

he had much more difficulty preserving its inter-communal character. After all neither the workers nor the peasants yet possessed independent organizations or an independent leadership of their own. When Gandhi called off the movement they had no means of continuing it. The Muslims, however, did have organizations of their own and a leadership of their own. These had been prepared to support Gandhi so long as he seemed to be offering some sort of challenge against the British but they were soon to discover the severe limits that he was to place on this challenge. Thus during the height of the non-cooperation movement there was a fierce battle between Gandhi and Hasrat Mohani and other militant Muslim leaders who were insisting that Congress should clearly state that *Swaraj* meant 'full Independence free from all foreign control' and that all means necessary should be used to obtain it.⁵⁹ Although the Muslim movement was in a sense more backward than the older Congress movement it was, partly for this very reason, less integrated into the structures whereby the British governed India and less mesmerized by the British connection. The Hindu politicians of Congress had been loyally petitioning the British Government for decades, had long participated in British supervised elections and had been drawn into every level of the British administration. Once they were aroused the Muslims saw no reason to stop short of complete Independence and they tended to be greatly frustrated by the tactics Gandhi sought to impose on them. The Bombay Commissioner of Police remarked: 'It is clear that there is a party to whom the policy of non-violence is repugnant; it is I understand regarded as degrading that a race that has hitherto taken pride in its martial valour and has been respected for it should now ally itself with an unbelieving leader whose religion forbids him to take any sort of life and should moreover accept its policy from him; and there are many who argue that nothing has ever yet been achieved by non-violence.'⁶⁰

Such strains in the Hindu-Muslim alliance were compounded by the communalist undertones which surfaced in the wake of the non-cooperation movement. A Bengali Muslim paper commented in 1921: 'The manner in which Mr Gandhi is being worshipped in the country makes it impossible for the Moslem community to pull on with him. We are ready to work with the Hindus as their brethren; we can even forego *korban* (cow sacrifice) for their satisfaction, but we will never allow the holy crescent to lie low at the feet of Sri Krishna.'⁶¹

So long as the nationalist leaders made no attempt to combat the influence of religion, communal reactions were inescapable. They were encouraged not just by the machinations of the British and the backwardness of the nationalist leadership but by the whole structure of the Indian social formation after more than a century of British imperialism. Throughout India the social relations of production combined a capitalist market on the one hand with pre-capitalist forms of

⁵⁹ Desai, op. cit., p. 284.

⁶⁰ Brown, op. cit., p. 336.

⁶¹ Brown, op. cit., p. 329.

exploitation on the other. Outside the towns capitalism had scarcely penetrated the underlying process of production, yet at the same time it had introduced a qualitatively stronger market framework than had existed hitherto.⁶² Communal and caste organization acquired a new significance in these conditions since corporate competition on the market was mediated through it. There is in fact reason to believe that just as the market intensified forms of pre-capitalist exploitation so also it lent a new virulence to communal and caste antagonisms. By bringing into question the nature of the central political power, without being able to offer a clear solution, the national movement further aggravated the situation. Of course a clear solution would have had to be a class solution, but the Indian bourgeoisie was too weak to be able to sustain one at this point, while the exploited and oppressed classes lacked even the most rudimentary organization or leadership. Seen in this light the restrictions which Gandhi sought to place on the national movement had a certain logic. The Indian bourgeoisie was in no position to launch an uncompromising liberation struggle since this would threaten to engulf it in communal and class conflict which it would be quite incapable of controlling. It was therefore driven back on the tactic of making a moral-political appeal to the British to recognize that their best interests lay in a peaceful decolonization that would leave the underlying structure of imperialism intact.

Aftermath of Non-co-operation

All these tendencies were, of course, only embryonically apparent after the first non-co-operation movement. It is however significant that Congress waited nearly a decade before launching another campaign of this sort. When they did so the results were very similar, with uncontrolled outbreaks which scandalized the Gandhian leadership and a growing rift between Muslims and Hindus. Moreover on this occasion Gandhi sought to secure the support of the Untouchables in a very similar way to his earlier approaches to the Muslims. On the one hand he baptized the Untouchables with the odiously patronizing name *Harijan* (children of god), on the other he continued to proclaim the sanctity of the Hindu social categories. Not surprisingly the more militant Untouchable leaders, such as B. R. Ambedkar, developed a fierce hatred of Gandhi's self-delusions and hypocrisy on this question.

Gandhi's action in calling off the 1920-22 non-co-operation movement disconcerted or angered many Congress leaders. An important section of the Bengali Congress, led by C. R. Das reverted to the more traditional tactics of pressing for *Swaraj* through participation in the electoral bodies set up by the British. At the same time there was

⁶² See Uma Patnaik 'The Development of Capitalism in Agriculture', *Social Scientist* (New Delhi), Vol. 1, No. 2, September 1972. The expression 'colonial social formation' refers to a specific combination of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production and has nothing to do with the fictitious notion of a 'colonial mode of production'. That a social formation can combine more than one mode of production is, of course, an elementary principle of historical materialism and renders quite redundant attempts to invent new modes of production to explain such combinations. Cf. Ernesto Laclau, 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', *New Left Review* 67, May-June 1971.

considerable pressure in Bengal, Bombay and other places for the development of more adequate organizational forms which would enable Congress to promote a subsequent agitation more successfully. In 1920 an All-India Trade Union Congress had been founded but it had been too weak to co-ordinate the strikes which had erupted in every part of India during the non-co-operation movement. The working class was generally most militant in Bombay where there had been a general strike in support of Tilak, the Congress 'Extremist', as early as 1907. The war had led to a considerable development of industrial employment and created the conditions for the rise of an organized trade union movement. In Bengal there were unorganized strikes during the non-co-operation movement and afterwards Das and other Congress politicians had encouraged the development of trade unions. However it was not until the late twenties and early thirties, with a general deterioration of economic conditions for the working masses as a consequence of the depression, that really strong strike movements developed in Bengal. When this did occur it helped to push Congress to the left and led to the most blatant class collaborators being ejected from the ARRU Congress. This helped to re-inforce a certain left trend within Congress itself which wished to base the national movement on a more secular and modern philosophy than Gandhi's abysmally reactionary, obscurantist nostalgia for the authoritarian simplicity of a mythical Hindu past in *Hind Swaraj*.

Congress 'Socialism'

It was at this time that men such as Nehru began confecting Congress 'socialism'. However, instead of challenging Gandhi's mystifications head-on, Nehru and others sought to supplement them with an economic doctrine that would be more relevant to the problems of the Indian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. As so often happened in the history of relations between India and Britain the dismal backwardness of the political traditions in the two countries helped to re-inforce and confirm one another. Nehru and other Congress socialists were able to draw on the doctrines of Fabianism just as the Fabians had been able to point to Gandhi as the alibi for their own deep complicity in imperialism. Tom Nairn has well described the core of Fabian ideology: "They (the Fabians) adapted and transformed third-rate bourgeois traditions into fourth-rate socialist traditions, imposing upon the working class all the righteous mediocrity and worthless philistinism of the pious Victorian petty bourgeoisie. Fabianism was derived from Utilitarianism, the timid and dreary species of bourgeois rationalism embraced by the British industrial middle class during the Industrial Revolution. In it bourgeois rationalism became socialist rationalism chiefly through the substitution of the State for the magic forces of the *laissez faire* capitalist market: the former was seen as bringing about the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" almost as automatically as the latter had been. According to this ideology of minor functionaries, although the working class made socialism possible (with their votes), the new society would actually be created by an eternal "elite of unassuming experts . . . exercising the power inherent in superior knowledge and

longer administrative experience". [These latter phrases are taken from Beatrice Webb.]⁶³

It may be imagined that the not inconsiderable number of minor functionaries in and around Congress were extremely receptive to this brand of socialism. However the mere fact that Nehru and the Congress socialists, unlike Gandhi, at least inhabited the modern world was not sufficient to establish their hegemony over Congress. Just as the British Labour Party needed the immense upheaval of the first World War to bring it to accept even Fabian 'socialism', so Congress was only led to adopt its variety of 'socialism' by the long travail of the national movement between 1922 and 1939. During this time the defects of Gandhian ideology were to be thrown into harsh relief by the ravages of the depression, the repressive and cynical manoeuvres of the British, the evident perils of communal division and, last but not least, the stirrings of a genuine national and class consciousness among the mass of Indian peasants, workers and students. The hegemony that Nehru was able to exercise at the end of this long drawn-out process did signal a major advance for the Indian national movement and for the Indian bourgeoisie in at least one vital area. It meant that a brand of secular politics had relegated the Mahatma's religious obscurantism to a subordinate position. Although a heavy price still had to be paid for Indian nationalism's prolonged flirtation with Hindu revivalism, and millions were to perish in Partition and the subsequent Indo-Pak wars, at least the Indian state was established on a secular basis. Jawaharlal Nehru was a fake socialist but he had a genuine antipathy to communalism and religious politics. Specifically with reference to the religious element in the anti-Partition movement he insisted: 'Socially speaking, the revival of Indian nationalism in 1907 was definitely reactionary.'⁶⁴ However had the struggle for secular nationalism been left entirely to Jawaharlal Nehru and his circle we may doubt whether this decisive transformation would ever have been achieved. Nehru never clashed openly with Gandhi. Although he did not share the Mahatma's religious obsessions, he always treated them most indulgently. Nehru's attitude to Gandhi sprang from an awareness that Gandhi enjoyed a rapport with the Indian masses which his own aristocratic and intellectual outlook denied him. Nehru was only able to grasp the reins of power in Congress as a consequence of battles against Gandhian ideology and leadership in which radical and secular nationalism was to find doughtier champions than himself. In the first of these battles Nehru assumed the Presidency of Congress at the Lahore Conference of 1930 in alliance with a dynamic and popular young nationalist from Bengal, Subhas Chandra Bose. Although Nehru and Bose were able to push Congress to adopt a more radical programme and to resume nationalist agitation, Gandhi was still entrusted with the implementation of the subsequent Civil Disobedience Movement. A second battle against Gandhian ideology was to arise out of the debacle of the Civil Disobedience Movement and Subhas Bose was again to play a prominent role. But although Bose

⁶³ Tom Nairn 'Anatomy of the Labour Party', *New Left Review*, 27, September-October 1964, pp. 44-45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 332.

triumphed in 1939 he lacked the ideological and organizational resources to consolidate his victory. Nehru and Congress 'socialism' were able to step into the vacuum with Gandhi's benediction. Although Gandhi continued to play a major role in Congress, especially during the Second World War, the successful challenge to Gandhian ideology in the late thirties undoubtedly strengthened Nehru's position *vis-à-vis* the Mahatma.

The Radicalization of Congress

Ideologically Subhas Chandra Bose was a militant nationalist, who eschewed religious themes and sought to replace them with a belief in the historical destiny of the East. The victory of Japan over Tsarist Russia in 1905 had already stimulated a current of political feeling in Bengal that might be termed premature Third Worldism. Surendranath Banerjee greeted the Japanese victory as a vindication of the potentialities of the Eastern nations. In some cases, as with Aurobindo Ghosh, similar sentiments were accompanied by an attachment to Hindu revivalism and a belief in Asia as the moral regenerator of the world. More frequently pan-Asianism was seen as a way of transcending any purely Hindu communal ideology and thus providing a base for Hindu-Moslem unity. Tagore sought to spread the message of a universal brotherhood created by the spirituality of Eastern Man and was to remain an admirer of Japan until its imperialist depredations became too blatant for him to ignore. C. R. Das devoted a part of his Presidential address to Congress in 1922 to the theme of pan-Asianism in the hope of providing ideological cement for the already threatened alliance with the Muslims. Subhas Chandra Bose sought to blend pan-Asianism with the radical social and political themes which came to the fore in Bengal in the twenties and thirties following the non-co-operation movements. The agitation of students and workers in the late twenties combined with acute frustration at Gandhian methods to produce a growing interest in radical politics and a recrudescence of terrorist tactics. The writings of Marx and Lenin were eagerly read even by many who by no means considered themselves Marxists. *Forward*, a paper run first by C. R. Das and then by Bose, often serialized writings of this sort on the grounds that Indian nationalists should be aware of the ideas and tactics put forward by those engaged in struggle elsewhere.

Meanwhile terrorist activities were resumed and with greater success than before. In the course of 1930-31 the Inspector General of Police in Bengal, the Superintendent of Police, a District Magistrate and a Sessions Judge were all assassinated. In June 1931 the Chittagong Armoury was raided and 64 police killed. The radicalization in Bengal during these years acquired mass proportions which had a considerable impact on Congress. In 1928 there was a general strike in the Calcutta jute mills involving hundreds of thousands of workers. When Subhas Chandra Bose pressed Congress to adopt Complete Independence as its goal at the Calcutta Conference of 1928 he was supported by a demonstration of 50,000 mill workers. Although Nehru and Bose were to succeed in changing the objectives of Congress at the subsequent Conferences, Gandhi was still placed in charge of the Civil Diso-

bedience campaign. Although Gandhi attempted to restrict this movement to a narrow circle of those he had personally trained in the tactics of passive resistance the movement developed an even deeper mass character than the campaigns of 1920-22 and, as we have seen, was far from peaceful in Bengal. Peasants in a number of areas went over from non-payment of taxes to non-payment of rents, predictably incurring the anger of Gandhiji. After vigorous peasant disturbances in UP Gandhi issued the following statement to the UP landlords: 'I shall be no party to dispossessing the propertied classes of their property without just cause. My objective is to reach your hearts and convert you so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare . . . The Ram Rajya of my dream ensures the rights alike of prince and pauper. You may be sure that I shall throw the whole weight of my influence in preventing a class war . . . Our socialism or communism should be based on non-violence, and on the harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, the landlord and tenant.'⁶⁵ As the rural and urban middle class were the backbone of Congress after Gandhi's rise within it, he had every reason to maintain these amazing mystifications. It should be remembered that trade unions were still very weak and peasant associations practically non-existent. In Bengal the Congress attitude towards peasant agitation allowed a Muslim organization, the Krishak Praja Party, to win influence among the Muslim peasants by promising an end to the *zamindari* system. In general the Congress only survived in Bengal during these years because Bose was able to give Congress policy in the Province a more dynamic and radical twist. After the breakdown of attempts to negotiate with the British, Gandhi first sought to divert the mass upsurge by announcing that he was embarking on an indefinite fast and then advised the suspension of the entire Civil Disobedience Campaign. Subhas Bose issued a manifesto jointly with Vithalbhai Patel, who had led peasant agitation in Gujerat, denouncing Gandhi: 'The latest action of Mr Gandhi in suspending Civil Disobedience is a confession of failure . . . We are clearly of the opinion that Mr Gandhi as a political leader has failed. The time has come for a radical re-organization of Congress on a new principle, with a new method, for which a new leader is essential.'⁶⁶ This was the beginning of a campaign which led to Bose's election as President of Congress in 1939. However although Congress temporarily acquired a new leader in this way and was impelled to proclaim a radical nationalist programme, the change was to prove illusory. Bose employed a rhetoric of national and social liberation that was often couched in the language of revolutionary socialism. But Bose's apparently clear and rational commitment to socialism and anti-imperialism was in its own way as much a mystification as the maunderings of the Mahatma. Although Gandhi was often dismissed as a saintly but impractical dreamer, in fact his every action corresponded to real interests of the Indian bourgeois-landlord classes. He successfully welded together a class bloc that stretched from big industrial magnates such as Birla, Ambarlal, Sarabhai, Kasturbhai, Lalbhai and others to petty rural notables throughout the Indian countryside. Even his blatantly patronizing

⁶⁵ *Marathi*, 12 August 1934.

⁶⁶ *Desai*, op. cit., p. 367.

approach to *Harijans* and industrial workers ('Capitalists are fathers and workers are children') was somehow rendered palatable even to some of those it abused, since it was accompanied by the Mahatma's apparent willingness to sacrifice himself in their cause. Moreover Gandhi's supposedly saintly unconcern with practical matters was a myth which concealed great skill at political manoeuvring and manipulation. The triumph of Bose in 1939 was to reveal that he was in a much weaker position. Unlike Gandhi he had no secure class base and was dependent on the unstable moods of radicalism that swept the Bengali petty bourgeoisie. The big bourgeoisie of Calcutta naturally did not support him and had indeed been ardent Gandhians since the days of the first non-co-operation movement. On the other hand the workers and peasants organizations in Bengal were still comparatively weak—weak for example than the trade unions and peasant associations in and around Bombay. As a flamboyant popular leader Bose could mobilize large masses of people but this did not correspond to any really effective forms of mass organization. The Communist Party did dedicate itself to trying to develop these forms of organization and gave support to Bose at this time. But although Communism was able to build up considerable popular prestige in Bengal in the thirties it had no more than a thousand actual Party members by 1940. In general it had more success in organizing cultural associations such as the Progressive Writers' Workshop and the Indian People's Theatre Association than in establishing really strong trade unions. In the event Bose lacked the hard organizational and social base he would have needed to consolidate his success in securing election as President of Congress. Although he succeeded in getting Congress to accept militant and radical resolutions, Gandhi made sure that he did not gain real power through a series of organizational arrangements that would have done credit to a British trade union bureaucrat or a Tammany Hall political boss. The Congress machine was entrusted to Vallabhai Patel, who enjoyed good relations with Indian big business. Bose confirmed his own political weakness by resigning his post without a struggle. Gandhi and Nehru re-established control—though, as we have argued, the former's ideological hold on the national movement had been broken. However the resulting dominance of secular politics came much too late to avert the communal bloodbath of Partition.

'Netaji'

Bose attempted to create a political organization of his own, the Forward Block, and was soon placed under house arrest by the Government. He escaped and left India for Nazi Germany by way of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Having failed to mobilize a sufficiently strong internal movement he now sought an external deliverance from British domination. He eventually threw in his lot with the Japanese and formed the Indian National Army from among prisoners of war at Singapore. The fact that a large number of the prisoners of war were prepared to participate in Bose's venture showed that he could still attract significant support for his ideas. Moreover Bose's following was genuinely inter-communal in character. After the tide of battle turned decisively against the Japanese, Bose attempted to leave

Japan for the Soviet Union but died in an air-crash. Had he lived he would have played an important role in post-war developments. As it was British attempts to put on trial those who had taken part in the Indian National Army helped to provoke the unrest and mutiny which preceded Independence. Certainly Bose was one of the very few Indian leaders who appealed to both Hindus and Muslims: among his close associates were two leading Muslims, Shah Nawaz Khan, who later rose to prominence in the Indian Government, and Captain Habibur Rahman, who opted for the new state of Pakistan.

Since Bose's death Calcutta has been subject to frequent convulsions following rumours that *Netaji* (the Great Leader) Subhas Bose was alive and in hiding and that he would return at the time of his people's greatest need—which for the urban petty bourgeoisie and middle class has been every moment of their lives these past twenty-five years. At enormous open air meetings, amid the stirring echoes of devotional speeches and songs, his memory has been kept alive in the public mind. The *bbadralok* find in such occasions a welcome distraction from the trials and tribulations of their fallen state; hope mingling with despair they re-affirm their faith in his Second Coming and look forward to it as their hour of deliverance. However although an entity known as the Forward Block still survives it is not a major political factor in West Bengal politics. The passing of Subhas Bose left a vacuum which has largely been filled by local Communism. At a by-election in mid-1949 an important defeat was inflicted on Congress when the Communist Party joined forces with Subhas Bose's elder brother, Sarat Bose. Whatever the limitations of this Party—and they are many—its success in the forties, fifties and sixties marked a profound development and advance in Bengali politics. The ability of Communism to establish a powerful position in the Province must certainly be traced back to the intellectual and political traditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Although it will not be possible to present a systematic account of the rise of Communism in Bengal in this article, a brief indication of the nature of this development will furnish an appropriate conclusion.

Marxism and Bengal

The October Revolution met with a quick response from the most advanced nationalist circles in Bengal. Tarkanath Das sent a letter from the Tagore Castle in Calcutta on 12 December 1917 addressed: 'To the Honourable Working Mens and Soldiers Council of Russia through Leon Trotsky, Petrograd, Russia'. It read: 'A revolutionary India rejoices at the idea of a free Russia, with the true idea of government of the people, by the people, and for the people.'

Throughout the twenties enthusiasm of this sort was to be expressed by radical and militant nationalists in Bengal. At the same time Communism was able to attract some of the most brilliant figures of the nationalist movement, notably M. N. Roy. However as an organized force Communism remained extremely weak in Bengal, as in the rest of India. Militant nationalists did not see the necessity for a strong Communist Party; moreover their admiration for Russia by no means

implied an understanding of Marxism or Leninism. M. N. Roy had been drawn into politics by the agitation against Partition and had been a member of a terrorist group. Sent on a mission abroad at the time of the First World War he met Borodin under whose influence he became a Marxist. At the Third International's second congress Roy was able to contribute major clarifications to the Theses adopted on colonial questions. He insisted that the formulations initially proposed by Lenin incorrectly attributed a revolutionary role to the bourgeoisie of the colonial lands and ignored the complicity between the imperialist and the colonial bourgeoisie which was frequently to be encountered, especially in countries such as India. Roy also stressed the importance of establishing revolutionary workers' parties in the colonial lands which would alone be able to give resolute leadership to the national revolutionary struggle and which should aim to develop this struggle towards the establishment of peasant and worker soviets which would challenge the colonial and semi-colonial state structures. After a prolonged discussion Lenin and the other leaders of the International accepted Roy's theses and amendments.⁶⁷ Roy was to make a notable contribution to Indian Marxism through a host of books and pamphlets, on politics, history and philosophy. During the twenties he travelled widely as an emissary of the Comintern but played little direct part in Bengal politics. In the early thirties Roy broke with Stalin and returned to India but was soon imprisoned by the British. Although Roy was later to abandon Marxism his attacks on religious mystification and on Gandhi continued to influence the radical and secular current in Indian nationalism.

M. N. Roy's absence from Bengal during the twenties meant that the task of organizing Communism there fell to others. Significantly many of these were to be former Muslims, such as Muzaffar Ahmad, Abdul Razzak Khan and Abdul Halim. It was also able to recruit former terrorists, including those responsible for the most remarkable act of this type, the raid on the Chittagong Armoury. However by 1932 the Party still had less than forty members. Communism was weakened in Bengal and India as a whole by a sectarian policy towards Congress during the Comintern's Third Period. This meant that the radicalization of Congress in the late twenties and early thirties was led by Nehru and Subhas Bose with negligible Communist intervention. But it remains the case that Communism evoked infinitely less response in India than in many other countries, especially China. This demonstrates the remarkable strength of the pact between British imperialism and India's indigenous possessing classes—a strength that was both ideological and material and grew out of the special character of the colonial social formation.

In the thirties Communism was able to make somewhat greater headway. The attention that Communists paid to organizing workers and peasants allowed them to win some important positions in Bombay, Bengal and some other areas. With the advent of Popular Front

⁶⁷ See V. I. Lenin 'Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions', *Collected Works*, Moscow, 1966, Vol. 31, pp. 240-5. Also Leon Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, New York, 1945, Vol. 1, p. 236.

policies the Party also made a turn to Congress which enabled it to benefit from the radicalization of the late thirties—notably in Kerala but also in Bengal. However the turn to Congress was accompanied by a virtual abandonment of its class approach to the national struggle. Education within the Party on the need to smash the colonial state apparatus, on the nature of imperialism and on the role of the working class and peasantry was to become extremely vague and equivocal. Often Communism was presented as simply a more radical and consistent species of Congress socialism.⁶⁸ Too often being a Communist meant simply having a positive attitude towards the Soviet Union and a belief that, after Independence, the state should control the economy. The overlap between this sort of 'Communism' and the 'socialism' of petty functionaries is evident enough. Stalin's insistence on the anti-imperialist role of the so-called national bourgeoisie was further to weaken the Party's already inadequate grasp of the class dynamic of the national struggle. The incantatory formulas of Stalinism, the incense burning before the image of the Great Leader and the belief that blind obedience would lead to providential deliverance, fitted into well-established indigenous traditions only too easily. The ideology of Indian Communism was further debauched during the war when the Party gave vociferous support to British imperialism after the Soviet Union was invaded. This meant that the Party actively opposed the great nationalist upsurge at the time of the Quit India Movement. The opposite but complementary aberrations of the Communist Party and of Subhas Bose thus allowed Congress to re-establish its hegemony over the national movement after the serious radical challenge of the nineteen thirties. However the Party retained enough support to become a significant factor in the pre-Independence upsurge. In Bengal it began to challenge Congress at this time and Communists were prominent in the great Tebhaga peasant uprising in 1946. An ill-prepared and premature attempt to stage an insurrection in the late forties was followed by an accommodation with Congress and the Indian bourgeois state in the fifties.

A Break with the Past

The rise of the Communist Party in West Bengal signified a break with much of the elitist tradition of *bhadralok* politics. Under its leadership the trade unions became a powerful and militant force in the Calcutta factories, integrating many non-Bengali workers. In the

⁶⁸ Colletti has argued that there is similarity between the confusion of German Social Democracy on the question of the capitalist state and developments in the Communist Parties in the Stalin and post-Stalin periods: cf. Lucio Colletti, *From Rousseau to Lenin*, London, 1972, pp. 45–111 and 219–229. In India Comintern pressure on the Communist Party to abandon the Leninist conception of the state was supplemented by strong internal pressures from sections of the Indian bourgeoisie who were attracted to a neo-Menshevik Marxism which accepted the inevitability of a bourgeois democratic stage in the Indian revolution. An oppositional Communist, Sanmyendnath Tagore, was to comment in the late thirties: 'At the present time, we are passing through a phase which can well bear comparison with that period in Russia known as legal Marxism. Marxism shorn of its revolutionary content had become the fashion of the day . . . The Indian bourgeoisie through its sympathetic consideration of Marxism, tries to vulgarize Marxism and turn it into a respectable evolutionary theory.' *The Bourgeois Democratic Revolution and India*, Calcutta, 1939.

countrywide the Party also developed its organization and established strong peasant associations. At the same time the Indian variety of Stalinism allowed some of the most negative *bhadralok* habits to linger and even acquire new forms. When the Communist Party split in the early nineteen sixties the bulk of the Bengal Party joined the left grouping, the CPI (Marxist). Neither the remnants of the CPI nor the new CPI(M) undertook any re-examination of the Party's history or ideology. Although the CPI(M) was subsequently to break from the tutelage of both Moscow and Peking, its subsequent performance has proved that in itself this was by no means sufficient to free it of the sorry traditions of Indian Communism. The Party has twice dominated Governments formed in West Bengal without discovering any strategy that would enable it to use its position decisively to advance the revolutionary cause. Most of its activity has been concentrated on electoral concerns and on the illusory hope of 'neutralizing' the bourgeois state machine by Government manipulation. While in office its Governments failed to develop a dynamic anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist programme. In place of genuine extra-parliamentary mass mobilization, the Party leaders contented themselves with impressive but transitory public demonstrations.

The real problem to which the Party should have devoted itself was that of using its Governmental position to assist a mobilization of Bengali peasants and workers against the bourgeois state machine leading to the creation of a revolutionary power and an armed popular force. No one can pretend that the problems to be solved were easy ones but the CPI(M) completely failed even to identify the problem. It was as if Lenin's *State and Revolution* had never been written; which from the point of view of Indian Communism is just about the case. Moreover, if Lenin was a distant, half-remembered figure, Trotsky's theses on the nature of a transitional revolutionary programme and of the class dynamic of permanent revolution were totally obscured for Indian Communists by Stalinist mythology. The political tactics of the CPI(M) not only failed to confront the question of class power but actively mystified Indian politics by a series of improbable alliances. In Kerala and Bengal it was prepared to ally with any group that opposed Congress, while in Delhi it even voted for Mrs Indira Gandhi in 1969. Mrs Gandhi, however, displayed a surer grasp of the class interests she represents: CPI(M) support for her was repaid in a murderous campaign waged against the Party by Congress thugs in West Bengal.⁶⁹

Survivals

The persistent but unavailing electoralism of the CPI(M) inevitably bred a left revolt by some of the Party's best militants. This contributed to the so-called Naxalite rebellion. Just as the CPI(M)'s politics are disturbingly reminiscent of the constitutionalism of Surendranath Banerjee or C. R. Das so the revolt of the Naxalites was to echo the

⁶⁹ Even hostile accounts of the Party concede the scale of its mass work; e.g. M. F. Franda, *Radical Politics in West Bengal*, London, 1972. For an account of the Congress campaign against the Party see Biplap Dasgupta, 'West Bengal Today', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 1, No. 8, March 1973.

obsessional religious exaltation of the early terrorists. The obsolete patterns of *bhadralok* politics had been perfectly preserved in the embalming fluid of Stalinist ideology. The great advance that the rise of a mass Communist Party could have signalled for Bengal had been heavily compromised. Lenin said of the Russian terrorists that they encouraged passivity in the masses by resorting to the individual elimination of members of the ruling class. The Naxalites were only more advanced in that they involuntarily failed to eliminate any important ruling class figure. Unfortunately they displayed the same taste for dubious alliances as the CPI(M) and entered into association with the gangster element in Calcutta who were to play a part in the Congress campaign against the CPI(M). The following account evokes this sad chapter in the history of the revolutionary movement in Bengal:

A Fearsome Catharsis

"This quinquennium has been one of the goriest in the history of revolution-mongering in this country... from urban guerrilla ventures to merciless internecine war much blood has been spilt, umpteen dogmas have been aired and practiced, talents have been recruited and laid to waste, enormous courage has been displayed by several thousand young men and women... Even in West Bengal, the cradle of the Naxalbari movement, the outcome has been a fantastic backlash and the Congress Party is now entrenched in a manner without any precedent; elsewhere in the country, Naxalbari has become a synonym for a joke; across the border in Bangladesh the adherents of the movement, a mere handful, are on the run: however hard they try now, it will be most difficult for them to get out of the stigma or allegation that they opted out of the war of national liberation... Misinterpreting the symptoms of discontent in the wake of spiralling food crisis, all agog over reading Lin Piao's thesis about how the country surrounds encircles the city, they concluded that the revolution was for the taking. No need to organize the masses before the event, they will join the revolution once the sparks start flying; no need to be excessively mulish about imparting political education to fresh recruits—even the so-called anti-social elements, wagon breakers and professional murderers included, would be pressed into service; let violence be afoot for fire turns everything pure and once the revolution is abroad in India, in the afterglow nobody will be sorry if the person who slashed the throat of the class enemy was a genuine ideologue or a ruffian from the market place. Revolution by the short cut was Charu Mazumdar's obsession. The Chinese strung him along for a while, and dropped him quietly after it became obvious what a dead-end he was reaching towards. The pragmatist *goondas* with whom he had struck an alliance soon deserted him; the police, they soon discovered, had a better percentage to offer. Amble down the streets and bylanes of Calcutta, it will be a revelation of a sort: the same young men who, two seasons ago, steeped in the teachings of Mazumdar, were scribbling invocations to Mao Tse-tung are now engaged, on a full time basis in deification of Indira Gandhi...

A chapter is now ended: Lin Piao disappeared from the scene, the leaders of the great Chinese Party in a faint echo of the Soviet revisions,

have started entertaining the unspeakably savage ones who are the perpetrators of the crime of Vietnam, the Naxalbari movement has been puffed out practically everywhere, the CPM is on the run, the revolutionary slogans are all gone from the West Bengal walls, and Charu Mazumdar is safely in prison. Meanwhile so many bright and fearless ones got themselves killed . . . and so much is lost for the traditional leftist movement in the country. Who knows what historic process has been served by this fearsome catharsis?⁷⁰

The small size of the Communist forces in East Bengal has failed to save them from a debacle almost as momentous as that in West Bengal. They permitted the question of East Bengal's oppression by West Pakistan to be virtually monopolized by a bourgeois Party, the Awami League. Having lost the leadership of the national movement, the divergent wings of Communism in Bangladesh proceeded to compound their error in the post-Independence period. The pro-Moscow wing supported Mujib as he consolidated his rule through corruption and demagoguery. The other wing allied with the most backward communalist forces in an unsuccessful attempt to make electoral gains. Mujib, who so disastrously adopted the tactics of constitutional petition with the brutalized military machine of General Yahya, has now belatedly discovered the uses of fire-power as he encourages his thugs to gun down dissident students and workers. Only the impotence of his compromised opponents enables him to trample on all the hopes which liberation inspired.

In a summary and impressionistic fashion this study has sought to focus on the dialectic of continuity and discontinuity in Bengal's history. Of all the regions of the subcontinent Bengal has perhaps been most subject to influences from other countries. The access to world culture and to new and liberating ideas that this has entailed has frequently allowed Bengalis to make a notable contribution to the liberation struggles of the subcontinent. But, as we have seen, the impact of external forces has also served to preserve and consolidate some of the most backward and reactionary characteristics of Bengal society. British colonialism sought to base itself on an intensification of the most archaic forms of exploitation; British policy nourished belief in constitutional progress while seeking to provoke the most virulent communal forces as soon as Bengalis started to produce politics of their own. Invocation of the shrivelled ideology of the British Fabians led a generation of Congress 'socialists' to drown in the stagnant and fetid waters of Indian capitalism. The cynical formulas of Stalinism wrecked the best hopes of the Bengali popular movement, and allowed it to become the expendable pawn of the Russian and Chinese leaders. In the end all these influences helped to produce a certain secularization of Bengali politics but at the heavy price of many disguised survivals of the past. Only a revolutionary internationalism based on the best energies of the worker and peasant masses can exorcise these ghostly revenants and sweep away the archaic and oppressive conditions that give them a semblance of life.

⁷⁰ 'Naxalites: End of a Chapter', a correspondent, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22 July 1972.